Faculty of Social Sciences
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Migrations on the Edge of Whiteness: Young Russian-Speaking Migrants in Helsinki, Finland

Daria Krivonos

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation examines young Russian-speakers' quest for 'Europeanness' through migration to Helsinki, and their lives in pursuit of this dream. The promised 'transition' to capitalist modernity has not recognised them as fully modern subjects who still have to be assisted on their way to full-fledged Europeanness. Migration to the 'West', embodied by Finland and Helsinki, is seen by young Russian-speakers as an attempt to emancipate themselves as modern and cosmopolitan subjects, and dis-identify from failed socialist modernity that lacks the futures presumably achieved in the 'West'.

Within finely-graded, spatialised hierarchies of the modern world, Finland has become part of the global 'West', having a complex history of 'Europeanness' and an in-between position between the East and West, with its historically precarious relation to whiteness and the need to emphasise own belonging to the European cultural tradition vis-à-vis Russianness. Young Russian-speakers' attempts to re-inscribe themselves into modern time and space, as well as their claims to whiteness following migration thus take place not in the heart of Western global modernity, but on its edge, and also on the edge of whiteness. This is a new context, wherein to analyse the production and racialisation of whiteness beyond the context of global metropoles, which nevertheless points to the very mode of connection to the global structures of race and whiteness in the geopolitical context that tends to escape post/decolonial critique.

The thesis consists of four peer-reviewed articles and the summary chapter, and draws on multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork done in Helsinki in 2014–2016. I conducted participant observation in integration, language and CV courses, and youth career counselling, and did interviews with 54 young people (aged 22 to 32), mainly from Russia and Estonia, the two largest migrant groups in Finland, but also other post-Soviet countries.

Through the concept of connected sociologies (Bhambra, 2014), the thesis brings research on postcoloniality and postsocialism into conversation. The analysis departs from the analytical division of the world into either postcolonial or postsocialist and draws on the intertwined relations of the spatially constructed world with race and coloniality being foundational to modernity and capitalism. I demonstrate how Russian-speakers' perception of their place in the global racial formation are constructed through the legacies of racial colonial projects that define the meaning of Europeanness itself. The analysis further argues that despite the persistence of whiteness and Europeanness in their claims to belonging to the 'West' after migration, these claims are continuously questioned through the relations of labour, challenged via the border regime, neoliberal workfare devices and day-to-day experiences of gendered racialisation. The study thus shows the workings of coloniality, labour and whiteness beyond North versus South constellations, and argues for thinking beyond the geographical boundaries of those places that are straightforwardly 'post-colonial'.

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This research has a single author but would not be possible without many people and encounters. Above all, my outmost gratitude goes to all the research participants in Helsinki without whom this research project would not exist. *Спасибо огромное!* Thank you for your time, energy, openness to a perfect stranger, and letting me into your lives. I have tried to handle your stories with the greatest care possible. I hope my work will contribute to bringing attention to enduring racialised and gendered inequalities, struggles for worth, as well as structural vulnerabilities produced by immigration controls. I hope migrant labour will be recognised and remunerated properly some day, and regular residence in the EU will not depend on relations of exploitation in the labour market.

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I am extremely grateful for the possibility to work together with Anni Kangas, Inna Perheentupa, Saara Särmä, Masha Godovannaya, and Elisa Pascucci in a Kone funded project 'Making Spaces of Justice Across the East-West Divide' . I thank Anni Kangas for her enthusiasm coming up with the project and emerging with new ideas. The project has given me the possibility to extend my immediate research interests, work in collaboration with artists, teach in a summer school, do and write about collaging, and make jokes with Nasreddin riding the donkey backwards (who knows will understand). I especially would like to thank Elisa Pascucci for her thorough and encouraging comments on the manuscript of the summary chapter and being a mental support hotline whenever I felt desperate finalising my thesis. I am

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I dedicate this thesis to all the young people who have experienced migration.

Helsinki, June 2019
Daria Krivonos

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The publications are referred in the text by their respective roman numerals.

1. Introduction: Strawberry Fields and the Global 'West'

In the final stages of writing up my PhD, I was sitting in Olga's kitchen in Helsinki wondering how I might understand young Russian-speaking people's migration to Helsinki.[1] Sipping tea, I asked Olga, my key research participant, why she thought so many Russian-speakers move to Finland and why they find it attractive. She told me that since she was a child she had wanted to study and obtain a university degree in languages. She then told me a story of going to Finland in the summers to pick strawberries on a private farm while she was still living in Russia, and how she had seen this as an opportunity to learn and practise her English among other foreign people. While telling this story she kept bursting into laughter:

> I was so soft-handed and work-shy (*beloruchka*)[2] compared with all the Polish people who were picking strawberries so efficiently and quickly. 'Who are you?', they asked me. 'A social scientist', I replied. We all laughed that this strawberry field had never seen a social scientist before. [*laughing*] In the evening, while everyone was partying and drinking in the dormitory, I was sitting with my *Business English* textbook studying English. When we went to visit [a small border town in Finland] and I spoke English with the local alcoholics, I thought, 'wow, what a great and clean place where even alcoholics speak English'. [*laughing*] I felt just great speaking English with these people. I came back home and finished courses in English–Russian translation. The course teachers told me: 'Girl, you do not need to prepare yourself to go abroad, to the West. You are already ready to go!'

Both of us were laughing at this youthful naivety, which we recognised and shared through our common backgrounds. I also recalled my own adolescent vision and parental pressure to learn foreign languages and gain cultural capital, as the only chance to bridge myself to the global and rest of the world. While clearly valuing herself as too educated for manual labour, Olga saw spending her summer holidays in Finland picking strawberries not only as an opportunity to earn some money through seasonal work, but also as a way to live in an international environment. This vignette illustrates young post-Soviet people's attempts to tie themselves to the global and cosmopolitan through migration, and the resources they use to enable this. Olga's short story illustrates the argument of this thesis: that Finland, and Helsinki specifically, is seen by young Russian-speakers primarily as part of the global 'West', offering the potential for self-transformation as modern and cosmopolitan subjects.

Clearly, Olga's description of labouring in strawberry fields in eastern Finland is very different from the glittering stories of world cities and global metropoles – it is not what would be described by the Russian

[1] I use the terms 'Russian-speaking' and 'post-Soviet youth' interchangeably to refer to young migrant people from post-Soviet countries (in this research, mainly from Russian and Estonia, but also Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan), for whom Russian is their first or one of their native languages.
[2] The word literally means 'white handed', a reference to Olga's social class and distancing from manual labour.

phrase 'See Paris and die' (see Gilburd, 2018) – which is exactly why Olga and I laughed so much. Yet it is the first pit stop to the 'West', crossing the edge of the 'West', the easternmost border of Western Europe, offering the promise of becoming part of Western modernity and the global. In the end, Paris and the strawberry fields on the Finnish-Russian border are both part of the same imaginative space of the 'West' and 'Europe', with its own internal hierarchies and unequal possibilities for access. In using inverted commas to speak of the 'West' and 'Europe', I signal an effort to maintain a critical distance from these terms, while recognising the structuring force of the norms of 'Westernness' and 'Europeanness' in establishing the modern world's spatialised and racialised hierarchies (Bhambra, 2014a; Hesse, 2007; Mignolo, 2000).

This research is about young post-Soviet people's quest for 'Europeanness', dis-identification from non-modern spaces and non-white Others, and struggles to become included in whiteness following migration to Finland. The thesis draws on multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in the capital, Helsinki in 2014–2016. I interviewed young people (aged 22 to 32), mainly from Russia and Estonia, the two largest migrant groups in Finland, but also Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, and conducted participant observations in integration, language and CV courses and youth career counselling. This PhD research was carried out as part of the projects entitled 'Migrant Youth Employment: Politics of Recognition and Boundaries of Belonging' (PI: Lena Näre, University of Helsinki, Kone Foundation and Emil Aaltonen Foundation grants), 'Insecure Lives: Irregular Migration and Precarious Labour in Finland' (PI: Lena Näre, Academyf of Finland), and 'Making Spaces of Justice Across the East-West Divide' (PI: Anni Kangas, Kone Foundation).

The thesis draws on stories of migration from the first post-Soviet generation born and raised following the collapse of the socialist system. It discusses how they see their position in the modern world order, and how they imagine, and are imagined by, Europe. Existing research on post-Soviet migrants has been carried out in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union, with some recent studies focusing on language identity, gender and 'integration' (Kopnina, 2005; Cretu, 2016; Ryazanova-Clarke, 2018; Saarinen, 2012; Tkach, 2014, 2016; Savoskul, 2016). Migrations from postsocialist countries have also been extensively researched in the context of EU accession states (Ryan et al., 2008; Sellar, Staddon & Young, 2009; Light & Young, 2009; Datta, 2009; Fox, 2013; Samaluk, 2015, 2016). This thesis examines young Russian-speakers' conceptions of themselves in the postsocialist and postcolonial world order. Inhabiting the global *posts* of the modern world, they are new and undertheorised subjects at a time when 'the second-world narrative in history is over' (Tlostanova, 2012: 131) and the promised 'transition' to capitalist modernity (Verdery, 1996) has not recognised them as fully modern and fully human subjects. Although they do not always have economic capital, many young Russian-speaking people believe that

their cultural capital,[3] such as university education and knowledge of foreign languages, will be transferred with migration and will bridge them to the global 'West'.

In the imaginative space informed by global coloniality and structured according to civilisational hierarchies, Finland is unlikely to be imagined as the centre of the modern/colonial world system (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2000) or the uncontested and homogenous 'West' which is taken as a starting point in post-/de-colonial critique.[4] An EU member state since 1995, Finland emerged as an independent state out of the multinational Russian Empire in 1917 and has had a historically precarious relationship with whiteness and an ambiguous position between East and West (Rastas, 2004; Keskinen, 2014; Leinonen, 2017). However, it belongs to the imaginative space and 'symbolic geographies' (Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 1992) of 'Europeanness' and 'Westernness', which has attracted young Russian-speakers seeking to generate their value as aspiring Europeans through migration to Helsinki. At the same time, as this research shows, young Russian-speakers are being incoporated into the 'West' as de-skilled workers or unemployed. This thesis reveals connections between migration, whiteness, coloniality and labour.

The title of this thesis refers to Finland's position between 'West' and 'non-West' as 'the edge of whiteness', with the longest EU border with the 'non-West', and at the far limit of the EU and Western Europe. This offers a novel context in which to analyse the construction of whiteness, coloniality, labour and migration beyond the histories of metropoles and former colonies (Leonard, 2010; Wekker, 2016), or migration from EU accession states (Fox, 2013; Fox, Moroşanu & Szilassy, 2012; Manolova, 2018), and shows the workings of coloniality and whiteness beyond North versus South constellations. This thesis connects young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland with global racial formation (Winant, 2001: 20) and analyses how these connections unfold in a localised context on the global periphery of whiteness, rather than the metropolitan centre and its colonial peripheries (see Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012). Despite the peripheral status and distance from global metropoles, both Finland and post-Soviet countries[5] are part of the same globally connected world structured by racialised hierarchies of modernity,

[3] I follow Bourdieu's (1998) understanding of capital existing in the form of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. Economic capital is directly convertible into money and can be institutionalised in the form of property rights. Cultural capital is institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications, knowledge and skills, and may, under certain conditions, be converted into economic capital.

[4] Both decoloniality and postcolonialism emerge out of political efforts to contest the colonial world order established by European empires, although their arguments are developed in relation to different time periods and geographical locations (see Bhambra, 2014b for a discussion). Postcolonialism refers mainly to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whereas decoloniality takes as its starting point the earlier European intrusion into what is now known as Latin America from the fifteenth century onwards. Although I am aware of these different theoretical trajectories, I take post-/de-colonial critique together to problematise the conflation of Europe with modernity, and consider the emergence of the modern world within broader histories of colonialism (see also Chapter 3).

[5] See Chapter 3 for a discussion of relations of coloniality within post-Soviet space and Russia's imperial configuration as the 'secondary empire' of modernity (Tlostanova, 2012).

civilisation/backwardness and Europeanness (Mills, 1997). Racialised hierarchies of the world are not only meaningful to the processes of racialisation *after* migration, as studies have importantly revealed (Erel, Murji & Nahaboo, 2016). As a way of organising the world into 'the West and the rest' (Hall, 2002), race and postcoloniality are at the centre of young Russian-speakers' migratory projects, since they imagine Finland as part of the modern 'West' and align themselves with it through migration as white aspiring Westerners. As postcolonial critique and the literature on the intersections of migration and race have often evoked a specific geographical imagery of North versus South, or colonisers versus colonised (Connell, 2007; Santos, 2014), East–West migrations have been theorised mainly in the aftermath of the collapse of the socialist system (Kopnina, 2005; Cretu, 2016; Näre, 2014) and more recent EU enlargement (Fox, 2013; Fox, Moroşanu & Szilassy, 2012; Sellar, Staddon & Young, 2009). This thesis departs from this analytical division of the world into either postcolonial or postsocialist (Chari & Verdery, 2009) and draws on the intertwined relations of the spatially constructed world.

At the same time, the title of this thesis refers to the place of Russian-speaking young people in Helsinki as being positioned on the edge – the outside limit – of whiteness in Finland. This research shows that the phenotypical whiteness of Russian-speaking youth is insufficient for them to be included in this space of 'Westernness' and 'Europeanness' as subjects of value. The findings reveal that life in Helsinki following migration does not always conform to young Russian-speakers' imaginings. Drawing on critical race and whiteness studies, my starting point is that whiteness is a structural position of advantage and privilege (Frankenberg, 1993), cross-cut by class, gender, ethnicity, citizenship and accent, rather than a matter of skin colour (Mills, 1997: 78-81; Ignatiev, 1995; Hartigan, 1997). This thesis draws attention to whiteness not as hegemonic (Hughey, 2010) and ordinary (Dyer, 1997), but as inherently unstable and impure, finely graded and hierarchically organised (Garner, 2006; Twine & Gallagher, 2008), resulting in the production of racialised categories, such as 'Russianness', in relation to ostensibly white groups. Thus, this research departs from assimilative and unidirectional narratives of how groups *become* white (Ignatiev, 1995; Brodkin, 1998), and instead brings to the fore ongoing struggles to become recognised as white subjects of value, and how these claims are unaccepted by the hegemonic white majority.

As the history of racial capitalism has proved (Du Bois, 1935; Robinson, 1983; Virdee, 2014), as a way to produce and fix 'difference' (Lowe, 1996: 28) and legitimise the power based on it (Molina, 2005), racialisation has been always materially located to create and manage hierarchies of labour. Young Russian-speakers' imaginaries of the 'West' encounter the material structures of labour, as the condition under which they are allowed to join the 'West' as racialised non-white or non-properly-white subjects. My research demonstrates that young Russian-speakers' paths *en route* to the global 'West' via Helsinki are confronted by the border regime, racialising neoliberal workfare devices and the day-to-day experiences of gendered racialisation. As non-EU citizens (except for Estonian and other EU citizens),

young Russian-speakers' residence in Finland is tied to legally enforceable controls through a system of residence permits, producing relations of production. In addition, this research took place in the context of activating labour market policies in Finland, which form the core of unemployment policies in most OECD countries, aiming to promote 'employability' through unpaid work activities to reintegrate the unemployed – and especially migrant and racialised unemployed – into the labour market. Under conditions of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983) and post-Fordism, whiteness is connected with the respectable worker identity (Skeggs, 1997), which is deployed by young unemployed and precariously employed Russian-speakers vis-à-vis non-white Others to claim their own worth following migration. This tension between imagining, being imagined and becoming emplaced within material and racialising structures of labour structures post-Soviet young people's quest for 'Europeanness'.

This thesis consists of four research articles taking different perspectives on the migration and racialisation of young Russian-speaking migrants in Helsinki, and seeks answers to the following research questions:

— How do young Russian-speaking people understand and conceptualise their migration to Helsinki and their position in the global hierarchies? (Article I)

— How does the border regime structure Russian-speakers' lives in migration, and how is it configured with other social categories? (Article II)

— How are young Russian-speaking migrants' skills constructed in their day-to-day encounters with welfare/workfare? (Article III)

— What resources do young Russian-speakers use to claim respectability when experiencing misrecognition as (highly-)skilled professionals? (Article IV)

Chapter 2 introduces the research context. It discusses relations between Finland and the Russian Empire/Soviet Union/Russia and the racialised position of Russian-speakers in Finland, and describes the border regime and the neoliberal restructuring of the welfare state. Chapter 3 presents theoretical approaches that have guided this research. It discusses relations between postcolonialism and postsocialism, and departs from an analytical division of the world divided into spaces marked by either postsocialism or postcolonialism (Chari & Verdery, 1996). It uses the notion of 'connected sociologies' (Bhambra, 2014) to show the interconnected relations of the spatially positioned world, and draws on critical race and whiteness studies to examine the position of young Russian-speakers in Finland as both being racialised and racialising non-white Others, and ways in which whiteness is connected with the management of labour hierarchies. This chapter also discusses Finland's own claims to whiteness and 'Westernness', thus drawing attention to the historically unstable and permeable workings of these

categories. Chapter 4 presents the methodology and data used in this thesis, showing how whiteness emerged as a key theme, how perceptions of my own social class worked as methodological capital, how some research participants saw me as part of the *intelligentsia* and 'non-Russian', and what this says about how they themselves want to be seen in Finland. Chapter 5 summarises the findings, which have been published as four peer-reviewed journal articles, and elaborates on how they tie in with each other. It also discusses the contributions of this research to debates on migration, coloniality, race and labour.

2. Research Context

In this chapter, I discuss the historical context of the racialisation of Russians in the process of Finnish nation building, and the position of Russian-speaking migrants in Finland today. I then examine the border regime which structures non-EU citizens' migration to Finland, and how this is tied to the production of labour. Finally, I position young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland within ongoing restructuring of the welfare state, class relations and the introduction of labour activation policies or workfare, through which migrant and racialised minority populations are made contingent and unprotected labour.

2.1 Young Russian-speaking migrants in Helsinki today and histories of Russians' racialisation in Finland

While Russia itself is the fourth-largest receiver of migrants from its own ex-colonies, the Russian population constitutes the third-largest diaspora in the world: over 11 million Russians live outside Russia (UN, 2018). Significant Russian minorities live in ex-Soviet Union countries (Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus), and in the European Union (Estonia, Latvia, Germany, Spain, Italy) and the US (Pew Research Centre, 2016). Just over 77,000 people spoke Russian in Finland in 2017, making them the largest single migrant group and representing a quarter of all foreign speakers in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2018). The Helsinki metropolitan area (Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo) is the most diverse area of Finland, with the largest migrant and racialised minority population in the country. The Russian-speaking population in Helsinki has doubled since the 2000s (Kobak, 2013). The 25-34 year-old age group makes up the majority of the Russian-speaking population in the Helsinki region (Kobak, 2013). A significant number of Russians also live in south-east Finland, close to the Finnish-Russian border (Davydova & Pöllänen, 2011; Pöllänen & Davydova, 2017).

Russian-speaking migrants in Finland are a diverse group, comprising people predominantly from Russia and Estonia,[6] but also from other former Soviet Union republics. I therefore refer to them as 'Russian-speaking' rather than 'Russian' migrants. In addition, Statistics Finland registers the foreign population according to languages other than the official languages of Finland (Finnish, Swedish and Saame). Thus, citizens from the former Soviet Union republics (not only citizens of the Russian Federation) fall under the largest category of 'Russian-speaking', with Estonian being the second most spoken language in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2017). Despite coming from different countries and with their own self-identifications, people from post-Soviet countries are often identified as 'Russians' in Finland (Puuronen, 2011). Russian citizens are the largest group of naturalised foreigners in Finland (Migri, 2019a). They also formed the largest group deported (legally deprived of the right to stay) from Finland in 2018. These

[6] The Russian minority represents 30 per cent of the Estonian population (Statistics Estonia, 2017).

people had previously been granted a residence permit, but had been refused a new permit or found guilty of serious or repeated crimes (Migri, 2019b).

Finland was part of the multinational Russian Empire from 1808 to 1917, so Russians were long part of Finland as permanent or temporary residents, soldiers, merchants, civil servants and tourists. According to Karemaa (1998), negative stereotypical perceptions of Russians in Europe as devious, violent, drunken barbarians date back to the sixteenth century, similar to the timeline described by Manuela Boatcă (2007) with reference to the production of Orientalist boundaries within Europe. My aim here is not to establish the origins of negative stereotypical perceptions of Russians or use historical events to 'explain' the contemporary racialisation of Russian-speakers in Finland. It is argued, nevertheless, that contemporary discrimination has historical underpinnings in relations between Finland and the Russian Empire/Soviet Union/Russia.

Russians have particular historical connections with Finland which are reflected in predominantly negative attitudes toward them (Nshom & Croucher, 2014; Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2002). Research has demonstrated that Russian-speakers are confronted with images of themselves as the Other, with unemployment and discrimination in the labour market being typical hardships (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2001: 112). Despite the importance of Russian-speakers as a community in Finland, ethnographic research on this group, and on young people in particular, is scarce and has concentrated mainly on social psychological aspects of 'acculturation' and 'adaptation' (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2002; Mähönen, Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2011), language identity (Iskanius, 2002), Ingrian Finns and ethnic re-migration (Koivukangas, 2002a; Davydova & Heikkinen, 2004)[7] and Russian migrant women (Saarinen, 2012; Sverdljuk, 2010; Saarinen, Hägg & Sverdljuk, 2008; Pöllänen & Davydova, 2017). This research thus sheds light on the first post-Soviet generation of young people, how they see their positions in the postsocialist and postcolonial world order, and what they seek to achieve through migration to Helsinki.

The historical legacy of relationships between the Soviet Union and Finland is often used to explain predominantly negative attitudes toward Russian-speaking people in Finland and their prominent position in the public discourse on migration (Leinonen, 2012). Researchers have claimed that Finnishness, as an opposite to Russianness, was gradually constructed during the process of building Finland into an independent *Western* nation (Puuronen, 2011). Some scholars understand distancing from Russia and Russianness from the perspective of Finland's identity formation as an independent nation, to which Russia was often a threat but sometimes a potential friend from the East (Browning, 2002, cited

[7] Most of these returning migrants are descendants of seventeenth- to early twentieth-century Finnish immigrants to the Ingria region (now the area around St Petersburg). I discuss this category of migrants in more detail in Section 2.2.

in Kangas, 2011). According to Puuronen (2011: 72-75), Finland's claim to Europeanness has been based largely on racialising and othering Russian people, as well as producing internal racialised hierarchies, including the subjugation of Roma and Sámi.[8]

Historians have argued that the construction of Russians as the Other in Finland has its roots in Finland's civil war and the interwar period between 1918 and 1939, which was arguably a formative moment in Finnish–Russian relations (see Kangas, 2011). Hostility toward Russia and Russians intensified during the Finnish civil war and the establishment of Finnish independence, to which Russia was considered a threat (Puuronen, 2011: 63). The divide within the Finnish nation during the 1918 civil war between the Reds and the Whites, which followed the aftermath of Finnish independence from the Russian Empire, was interpreted by many contemporaries as resulting from Russia's influence, associating Russianness with the threats of communism and Bolshevism. Finland also received large numbers of Russian refugees after the Bolshevik Revolution and during the Russian Civil War, with the maximum number reaching 33 500 in 1922 (Koivukangas, 2002b). As argued by some, aversion to Russia and Russianness replaced class antagonism in building national solidarity vis-à-vis 'foreign contamination' (Kirby, 1979, cited in Kangas, 2011; Karemaa, 1998). The Whites' victory in the Finnish civil war resulted in significant political power, with the establishment of right-wing associations such as Lotta Svärd and the Academic Karelia Society disseminating Russophobia in Finland, although the analytical focus on these extreme positions to explain the racialisation of Russians has been critiqued (see Kangas, 2011).

Another period of history often referred to in explaining relations between the two countries is the Second World War, including the Winter War (1939–1940) when Finland had to defend itself from Soviet attack. It has been argued that 'Russianness' was then associated with the 'barbarian East', against which Finland, as an independent nation, had to defend itself as a representative of the West (Kirves, 2008). After the war, which was felt as a humiliation by many contemporaries, Finland had to cede substantial territory in northern Finland and Karelia to the Soviet Union, which meant evacuating 410,000 Finnish Karelians, or 12 per cent of Finland's population (Tervonen, 2013: 9). Although these events took place over 70 years ago, research on stereotypes of Russian migrants among older and younger Finns in eastern Finland has shown little generational difference in their negative perceptions of Russians. This suggests that stereotypes are transferred from one generation to another through stories of struggles for independence and freedom against Russian oppressors (Nshom & Croucher, 2014).

While the histories of the two countries are intricately connected, the peak of Russian-speaking immigration into Finland in the twentieth century dates to the early 1990s in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, which coincided with severe economic recession in Finland. Until the 1980s, Finland

[8] Roma and Sámi are historical minorities in Finland.

was an emigration country, with Finns seeking better labour opportunities abroad, mainly in Sweden. Immigration also began to increase rapidly in the 1990s with the arrival of refugees from Somalia, Iraq, Iran and former Yugoslavia.

Migration to Finland was facilitated for citizens of the former Soviet Union who were of Finnish descent. In 1990, Finland's president, Mauno Kivisto announced that nationals of Finnish descent had a right to apply for repatriate status, allowing them to migrate to Finland through a special programme between 1991 and 2016 (Mähönen et al., 2015; Davydova & Heikkinen, 2004). The so-called 'ethnic re-migration' of Ingrian Finns and other people of Finnish origin from Russia and the former Soviet Union accounts for around half of Russian-speakers in Finland (Mähönen et al., 2015). Around half of the Ingrian Finnish population (some 30,000 people) moved to Finland during the 25 years of re-migration (Mähönen et al., 2015). Instead of the expected 'Finns', Finland received 'Russians', who often did not speak Finnish and were deemed to be 'culturally different', resulting in problems with 'integration' into Finnish society (Davydova & Heikkinen, 2004). At the same time, Finnish identity had to be demonstrated in the autobiographies that applicants had to write as part of their applications for repatriation (Davydova-Minguet, 2015). I discuss other migration channels to Finland in Section 2.2.

Contemporary attitudes toward Russians in Finland are dominated by feelings of superiority and contempt (Jerman, 2009; Paananen, 1999, cited in Leinonen, 2012). In fact, according to attitude studies, Scandinavian, white Americans are most welcomed as immigrants to Finland; Finns also favour Estonians and Polish over Russians and Somalis (Jaakkola, 2009). For example, as some studies have shown, absence of a Russian accent is a requirement for employment in some fields (Akhlaq, 2005), particularly in elderly care (Näre, 2013a: 77). Russians are still highly visible in the immigration discourse in Finland, being the largest group of migrants (Tanttu, 2009; Leinonen, 2012). However, since summer and autumn 2015, when Finland received over 30,000 asylum seekers, the public discourse on migration has shifted largely to asylum seekers from Iraq and Afghanistan (Keskinen, 2019).

Racialising notions are highly gendered, with Russian or 'Eastern' women exoticised and sexualised as ultra-feminine and willing to please (Penttinen, 2004). The processes of racialisation regarding Russians in Finland are also highly gendered and sexualised, as Russian women are often portrayed as fortune hunters who marry Finnish men in order to migrate to Finland (Leinonen, 2012; Urponen, 2008). Diatlova (2015) has shown that Russian femininity is closely associated with 'prostitution', and that women from Russia interiorise some of these notions. Ethnicity and gender are also constructed within the discourse of taste (Bourdieu, 1979) and clothing: Russian migrant women are stereotypically represented in TV shows with excessive make-up, short dresses, glittery fabrics and high heels (Gurova, 2015).

Research has shown that Russian-speakers experience over-qualification and status discord in Finland (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2007). Immigrants from Russia and other former Soviet Union republics are also at high risk of unemployment (Statistics Finland, 2013). Although it has been claimed that Russian-speakers in Finland have the advantage of better education (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2007), there is evidence that Russian-speakers take lower-status positions in the labour market than their education and qualifications should afford them. For instance, the Russian-speaking population is highly represented in office-cleaning, shop assistant, healthcare, construction, auto-repair and storage jobs (Statistics Finland, 2014; Kobak, 2013: 14). These occupations do not necessarily correspond with their educational qualifications, as this thesis also demonstrates. Larja et al. (2012) reveal that job-seekers with Russian names have to send twice as many job applications as applicants with Finnish names in order to be invited to interviews. The vast majority (70%) of the Russian-speaking population lives in rental accommodation, similarly to other foreign-speaking groups, whereas the majority of Finns own property (Kobak, 2013: 16). Social psychologists have shown that discrimination threatens the psychological and social wellbeing of Russian and other migrants in Finland. Russian, Somali and Kurdish participants report experiences of impolite and disrespectful treatment, verbal insults and feeling unsafe (Castaneda et al., 2015: 275). However, Kobak's (2013) study of Russian-speaking academics and IT workers in Helsinki demonstrates better career prospects for professionals in these fields, with many finding jobs prior to migration. However, Kobak (2013) also discusses gender differences in finding jobs, with female IT and academic professionals finding it more difficult to secure interviews and jobs.

In summary, in structural terms, Russian-speakers are concentrated in the low-end sector of the economy, and often experience status discord and de-skilling, with the exception of predominantly male IT and short contract-based academic workers. In addition, non-EU post-Soviet migrants' residence in Finland is tied to immigration controls and a system of residence permits, which influence their ability to move in social space, obtain employment and access welfare assistance. The next section discusses the border regime.

2.2 Border regime

Despite the relative ease with which Russian tourists can cross the territorial border with Finland, non-EU citizens' regular residence is tied to a system of residence permits, which is closely linked with the relations of production. While borders produce migration as something that must be regulated, the functioning of capitalism actually depends on people's mobility (Tazzioli, 2015; De Giorgi, 2010). The structure of residence permits creates migrants as flexible workers (Maury, 2017: 229; see Article II). Existing debate in critical border studies has shown the capitalist economy's dependence on inexpensive migrant labour, and how labour is produced through the border regime. Criminalisation, deportability and the production of 'illegality' have been analysed against the backdrop of the increasingly flexible and

de-regulated neoliberal economy (De Giorgi, 2010; De Genova, 2002). Migrant insecurity contributes to the production of a vulnerable labour force suited to the segmented labour markets of post-Fordism (De Giorgi, 2010; De Genova, 2002). Borders and immigration controls thus work as a mechanism for 'differential inclusion' (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013: 157) through which non-citizen subjects become labour. Thus, inclusion exists simultaneously with exclusion, rather than in opposition to it (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013: 7). Borders produce the boundaries of status and distinctions between people through unequal access to mobility (Rigo, 2005).

In 2018, Russian citizens were the largest group of applicants for a first residence permit in Finland, followed by Ukrainian and Indian citizens, and the largest age group of applicants was 18-34 years old (Migri, 2019a). In the case of Estonian and other EU citizens, there is a requirement to register in the local municipality if staying for longer than three months. While the migration literature has discussed precarity, insecurity and deportability extensively in relation to irregular and undocumented migrants (De Genova, 2002; De Giorgi, 2010; Bales & Mayblin, 2018), I show that deportability not only renders undocumented migrants a 'distinctly disposable commodity' (De Genova, 2002: 438), but also structures migrants' lives and employment through their regular yet precarious temporary migrant status (Diatlova & Näre, 2018; Article II).

Migration to Finland requires non-EU citizens to obtain a residence permit based on specific grounds. The most common categories for residence permit applications are work, family reunification, studying and other (au pair, ethnic re-migration). In 2018, residence permits granted to those with jobs in Finland were the most common basis for residence among Russian (1,139) and Ukrainian (2,056) citizens, followed by family reunification, of which the largest group was Russian citizens (1,199), and student residence permits (854), for which Russian citizens were the second-largest group after Chinese. It is important to bear in mind that these permits are administrative categories, which may actually offer a channel for migration and a way to regularise one's stay (see Article II). Since many young Russian-speakers explained their motivation for migration as an aspiration to *live in the West*, rather than working or studying in Finland (Article I), it would be hard to classify their mobility using typical migration categories such as labour migration, student mobility or family reunification. Instead, many young Russian-speaking migrants instrumentalise the system of residence permits in order to pursue their goal of living a different lifestyle in Finland (Article I). Most research participants in this study had moved to Finland as ethnic returnees, students, family members, workers or au pairs. Some were EU citizens, predominantly from Estonia, or had moved with their parents as minors (under 18 years old) and had since acquired Finnish citizenship.

A residence permit for an employed person requires a confirmed contract of employment with sufficient work hours and means of support. The applicant's employment is tied to labour market tests, meaning

that the employer must prove that no alternative labour is available for the job in question within a reasonable time in Finland or the EU/EEA. Thus, it is easier to get a permit in a sector with labour shortages. Since 15 January 2018, work permits for non-EU citizens are granted to the following sectors in the Uusimaa region (of which Helsinki is part): healthcare professionals, chefs, cooks (not pizzeria or kebab cooks), domestic workers and nannies working in private households, house builders, plumbers, roof repairers, construction painters, and office, hotel, facility and home cleaners (COME, 2018). Their salaries must be at least equivalent to those specified in the relevant collective agreement. The gross salary (in 2019) should be at least EUR 1,211 per month (Migri, 2019a). A minimum income must be guaranteed by the employment contract, meaning that it cannot be a zero-hours contract. Employees can only work in the professional field to which the job belongs and for which they have been granted a residence permit. Thus, the border regime funnels migrants into sectors with labour shortages and produces certain types of migrant workers.

Student residence permits, which are temporary B-type permits, require secure means of support, meaning that residence cannot depend on social assistance in Finland. Students must thus have EUR 6,720 per year in a bank account (EUR 560 per month) and expensive private insurance from a reliable company. Alternatively, they can secure their stay economically through an employment contract not exceeding 25 hours of work per week on average. Those with a higher education degree can apply for a one-year residence permit for seeking work and are eligible for a residence permit for gainful employment without labour market testing. While usually categorised as being outside the labour market and not included in statistics on migrant labour, student migrant workers make a significant input into the global labour market in low-skilled service jobs (Neilson, 2009). As part of the migrant labour force, student migrants bridge the gap between two administrative migrant categories: student-migrant and migrant-worker (Maury, 2017). Temporary visas also limit the possibility of planning for the future, since the visa requirements must be fulfilled in order to avoid deportation (Maury, 2017; Article II).

Residence permits based on family reunification are granted to foreign spouses of Finnish citizens, and to family members of foreign citizens working or studying in Finland. A general precondition for family reunification is sponsors' ability to provide for their family members, meaning that they must have sufficient income. In order to provide a means of support after taxation, they require approximately EUR 1,000 for the first adult, EUR 700 for each additional adult living in the same household, EUR 500 for the first child under 18 and EUR 400 for each additional child under 18 etc. Family members of Finnish citizens and ethnic returnees are exempt from providing means of support to bring their family members to Finland.

Although rather insignificant in the migration statistics (around 100 applications in 2018), some female participants in this study had used a one-year au pair visa as a channel to move to Finland owing to its

low entry requirements. The official purpose of au pairing is a cultural exchange for a young person (aged 17 to 30) performing 'light housework' for a maximum of 25 hours a week. Au pair placements are a blurry category, and au pairs are not granted the legal status of workers or students. Their salaries are fixed as 'pocket money' of at least EUR 280 per month, regardless of whether or not they work nights or stay with children alone for weeks, as had happened to some of my research participants (Article II). Since the early 1990s, what was initially intended to be a primarily intra-Western exchange programme for middle-class girls has been transformed into predominantly female migration from postsocialist countries and Southeast Asia to Western Europe (Rohde-Abuba & Tkach, 2016: 194). Au pairing is also a response to demand for domestic and care workers in private households resulting from the increasing labour market participation of women without male involvement in domestic and care labour. Au pair visas are often used by female graduates who, despite their educational qualifications, have no access to other means of migration (Rohde-Abuba & Tkach, 2016), as was the case for my research participants. As well-educated individuals, au pairs often experience care and domestic work and their dependent position in the host family as a social downgrading and devaluation of their educational qualifications (Tkach, 2014).

Until the queue was closed in 2016, people from the former Soviet Union of Finnish descent could apply for a returnee residence permit, which required them to prove that at least one of their parents or grandparents was a Finnish citizen by birth. Citizens of the Russian Federation were the largest group of applicants for such permits (Migri, 2019c), which do not require statements on the means of support and set no limits on the right to work or study in Finland. Owing to these easier entry requirements and access to social provision after migration than for other administrative categories, in Russian-speaking online forums Ingrian Finns are often seen as 'welfare scroungers', compared with 'contributing' Russian 'labour migrants' (Davydova-Minguet, 2015: 34). Work and employment are much discussed topics in Russian-speaking forums, creating the boundaries of the 'Russian-speaking' community and symbolic belonging to the Finnish nation (Davydova-Minguet, 2015).

At the same time, Russian-speaking migrants from the Baltic States, mainly from Estonia, have a right to freely cross national borders within the EU owing to their EU citizenship. However, Estonian citizens (both ethnic Russians and Estonians) are the largest single group deported from Finland for repeated or serious crimes (Migri, 2019b). These facts underscore that within the group of 'Russian-speakers' in Finland there are multiple legal hierarchies, such as differing rights to remain, benefits and prospects of long-term residency. This thesis discusses the status mobility of Russian-speaking youth and their interactions with the border regime (Article I).

The diverse channels for Russian-speakers' migration to Finland carry specific and legally enforceable entitlements and controls, depending on their legal status in the country. An ethnic returnee or family

member has a formal right to welfare benefits such as subsidised housing, unemployment benefits and integration courses, whereas students and former au pairs have no choice but to find work in order to stay in the country.

While insecure migrant status and exclusion from the welfare state force many to sell their own labour power in order to regularise their status as migrants, the Finnish welfare state has been undergoing steady restructuring, which has changed rights and obligations in relation to unemployment. Even after obtaining secure and permanent residence status, young Russian-speakers, along with other migrants (OECD, 2017), remain at high risk of unemployment (Statistics Finland, 2013) and becoming subject to labour activation measures, as discussed in the next section.

2.3 Migrant and racialised minority youth in the context of labour activation in Finland

This research took place in the context of rapid welfare restructuring, the introduction of austerity measures and the neoliberalisation of citizenship (Mäkinen, 2017). Unemployment has been a key arena for neoliberalisation. Although once considered a universalistic welfare state with needs-based entitlement and redistribution of wealth (Esping-Andersen, 1990), Finland has not escaped steady neoliberal restructuring, with increases in income disparity and the introduction of activating labour market policies (Alanko & Outinen, 2016; Haikkola, 2018). In fact, since the 1990s, successive Finnish governments have been dismantling the Nordic welfare state paradigm and implementing workfare reforms as part of an ethos of a 'competitive nation' (Kantola & Kananen, 2013). These have been consolidated in more recent reforms.

Labour market activation or workfare refers to state policies and schemes that require the unemployed to take part in work-related activities to become eligible for unemployment benefits (Peck, 2001; Adkins, 2015). Workfare thus reframes unemployment benefit from a citizenship right to a contractual obligation toward the market, whereby unemployed are required to demonstrate 'genuine' unemployment through active participation in job counselling meetings, skills enhancement courses and work trials. In other words, it reproduces unfree, contingent and unprotected labour (Haikkola, 2018; Cooper, 2012; Peck, 2001).

Young people and the long-term unemployed have been targeted as a particular group 'needing' activation, which has made their access to social benefits largely conditional. In 2013, Finland introduced the Youth Guarantee policy programme, which aimed to guarantee young people (under 30 years old) a study or work placement within three months of registering as unemployed. Despite the apparently 'caring language' and collective discourse about the need to help young people, their social assistance has been increasingly conditional on control, behavioural demands and participation in educational and work-related activities (Lorey, 2015; Haikkola, 2018). This has precarised the previously welfare-protected

labour force. 'Failed citizens' (Anderson, 2013) such as the unemployed become an opportunity for the market and neoliberal enterprise through contractual agreements with private companies as sites for 'skills' and 'employability enhancement'. In Finland, many activation programmes have been created in close cooperation with retail chains (Haikkola, Näre & Lähteenmaa, 2017). Workfare or labour activation in relation to young people promotes self-responsibility for unemployment, promising a more flexible workforce that can be easily adjusted to the demands of the labour market (Paju et al., forthcoming). Besides producing neoliberal and self-responsibilised subjectivities, activation produces labour power for insecure labour markets.

A key logic of labour activation is a distinction between deserving and undeserving unemployed (Peck, 2001), which is achieved in Finland by dividing the unemployed into three service lines. This 'streaming' of clients was introduced to make service delivery to the unemployed more effective. The first line, 'Employment and Business Services' is for those deemed the most employable and not requiring assistance in the labour market. The second line, 'Competence Development Services' is for those needing activation and skills enhancement, and was where I carried out participant observations for this research (Article III). This service line targets unemployed young people, a quarter of whom have migrant backgrounds (mother tongue other than Finnish or Swedish), most without post-compulsory education.[9] Russian-speaking and Somali youth are the largest migrant groups. The young people streamed to this service line may lose their unemployment benefits if they do not comply with the activation measures, since their progress to employability is reported to the Public Employment Office, which is entitled to cut social assistance. The third line, 'Supported Employment Services' is for those with disabling issues and needing 'intense assistance' (see section 5.3 for more discussion).

While the field of activation is undergoing constant changes, the conditionality of unemployment benefits on participation in work-related activities signals erosion of the universalistic principles of the Nordic welfare state and production of the labour force through 'welfare' itself. These developments are taking place alongside discourses around 'welfare chauvinism', which have framed discussions on migration in Finland, depicting migrants as passive welfare claimants (Keskinen, 2016). Problematisation of unemployed, and particularly racialised, youth as needing 'skills enhancement' through activation offers a new perspective on discussions of youth mobility (e.g. King et al., 2016). Young unemployed migrants can thus be seen as potential labour for precarious labour markets.

Although there is significant research evidence that migrant and racialised minority populations experience unemployment disproportionately (OECD, 2017), fewer studies have analysed how workfare

[9] These statistics come from the youth career counselling service where I carried out fieldwork for this study. To protect anonymity, the source of this data cannot be disclosed.

works in relation to these groups, despite increasing evidence that migrants' economic 'integration' takes place through workfare devices (Farris, 2017: 119-124; Nordberg, 2015; Scrinzi, 2011). Young Russian-speakers facing high unemployment rates (Statistics Finland, 2013) become a target for youth activation, which aims to enhance their skills in order to make them more 'employable'. In this thesis, I analyse how workfare operates in relation to young unemployed Russian-speakers in Helsinki (Article III), showing its classifying, racialising and gendering effects.

In summary, this chapter has revealed that the lives of post-Soviet young adults and their quest for emancipation and 'Europeanness' through Helsinki are enmeshed in older histories of Finnish nationalism and racialisation of 'Russianness' in Finland, as well as ongoing neoliberal restructuring of the welfare state and the border regime, closely tied to relations of production. The next chapter discusses my conceptual approaches to theorising how young Russian-speakers imagine their migration to the 'West' and become imagined by it through emplacement within racialised and gendered structures of labour.

3. Conceptual Approaches: Migration in the Context of Postcolonialism, Postsocialism and Whiteness

In this chapter, I first position my research within discussions of postcolonialism and postsocialism to describe a particular division of academic labour in analysis of specific global geographies. I argue that analysing the case of young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland *only* from the perspective of 'labour migration' closes down the possibility of analysing how they imagine their migration and positioning these imaginings in the context of global racial formation (Winant, 2001) and whiteness. In discussing the idea of the 'West' through the lens of postcolonial and critical race theory, I demonstrate how the imaginings of young Russian-speakers reach beyond the bounded localities of Finland and their home countries. I also discuss how racialisation of whiteness and the production of gendered racialised categories have material effects on relations of production.

3.1 'Thinking between the posts' in analysing young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland

Postcolonial theory has tended to focus on spaces with a social and political history of European colonialism (Mayblin, Piekut & Valentine, 2014). Relationships between the former 'first' and 'third' worlds continue to be a central point of postcolonial inquiry, although there have been recent calls for cross-fertilisation between postcolonial theory and critical postsocialist research in order to erode binary oppositions structuring conceptual thinking about the world (Cervinkova, 2012). At the same time, the postsocialist world has been often analysed through discourses of 'transition' and within the rubric of 'area studies' (Tlostanova, 2011; Koobak & Marling, 2014; Suchland, 2011). Migrations from Central Eastern Europe (CEE) and the former Soviet Union (FSU) have been analysed mainly in the historical context of the collapse of the socialist system and labour migration in the aftermath of EU enlargement (Kopnina, 2005; Datta, 2009; Fox, Moroşanu & Szilassy, 2012; Cretu, 2016; Manolova, 2018). I argue that looking at young post-Soviet migrants *only* as labour migrants, rather than analysing how they are made into labouring subjects, limits our understanding of how they imagine their migration and what they expect to achieve through migration to the imagined 'West'.

Although de-/post-colonial critique has argued that the power, knowledge and imaginaries produced as a result of colonialism have been global (Mills, 1997; Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2000; Bhambra, 2014), race has typically been reserved for theorisation on colour, (former) colonised populations and postcolonial migration to global metropoles (Hesse, 2007: 645; however, see Mayblin, Piekut & Valentine, 2014; Imre, 2005; Börösz, 2017; Baker, 2018; Zorko, 2018). Focusing on the postcolonial and race draws attention to certain populations and too often leaves others undiscussed. Theorising postsocialism within 'area studies' contribute to this omission.

Several scholars have argued that this academic division of labour derives from a specific meta-geography of the three worlds (Chari & Verdery, 2009; Suchland, 2011; Kangas & Salmenniemi, 2016). Although the Cold War is over and the 'three worlds' seem no longer to exist, the logic of dividing the world along the epistemological axis of the 'three worlds' is perpetuated (Silova, Millei & Piattoeva, 2017: 80; Kangas & Salmenniemi, 2016). According to this logic, while the former 'third world' has become a domain for anthropology, global studies and postcolonial theory, the 'second world' has become the object of 'area studies' dominated by narratives of 'transition' (Kangas & Salmenniemi, 2016). Thus, the three-world model divides the world either between spaces marked by postsocialism and those marked by postcolonialism, or between spheres defined by the end of the Cold War and those defined by the end of empire (Baker, 2018). This analytical separation of the world into spaces marked by either postcolonialism or postsocialism has been instrumental in organising the division of academic labour and disciplinary boundaries in social sciences (Baker, 2018; Chari & Verderi, 2009; Kangas & Salmenniemi, 2016). *What* these geopolitics of knowledge enable to be known must be taken into consideration (also Bhambra, 2014a).

Chari and Verdery (2009) have invited scholars to 'think between the posts' of postsocialism and postcolonialism, arguing that neither are mere frames for understanding certain regions of the world, but should be seen as historical processes with global reach. The postcolonial and postsocialist worlds are often analysed as regions with exceptional concerns. Instead, according to Chari and Verdery (2009), social scientists should ask about the effects of the collapse of state socialism on places beyond those that fell under its control, as well as the consequences of colonialism and decolonisation beyond spaces that were empires or were colonised. While some have critiqued this approach for the temporal and spatial inconsistencies of the postcolonial and the postsocialist (see Tlostanova, 2017: 8), this agenda recognises that the history of state socialism should not isolate the region from the rest of the globe. This argument also resonates with the broader postcolonial and decolonial critique which challenges the perception of the world as divided into spaces 'with' or 'without' colonial histories, and instead argues that spatialised hierarchies of modernity established as a result of colonial conquest are global (Du Bois, 1920; Mignolo, 2000; Baker, 2018; Bhambra, 2007a, 2007b; Mills, 1997; Hall, 1996). Race and racism structure modernity itself (Hesse, 2007: 644; Virdee, 2019).

Decolonial feminist discussion of the position of the postsocialist space in feminist studies is an inspiring starting point for thinking about the position of postsocialist and post-Soviet space in migration studies and critical race theories. Transnational feminist discussion by Central and East European scholars has drawn attention to the marginalisation of political locations such as postsocialist spaces, due to certain directionalities of thinking that prioritise what have come to be called the 'global North' and 'global South', neglecting the postsocialist space (Suchland, 2011; Grabowska, 2012; Koobak & Marling, 2014).

They have inquired into how the voices of the former 'second world' fit into transnational feminist discourses (Suchland, 2011: 838). While postcolonial and Black feminists have importantly deconstructed imbalances of power between 'Western' and 'non-Western' feminist scholars (Mohanty, 1984; Spivak, 1987; Collins, 2000), geopolitical gaps remain in transnational feminist studies, such as the position of postsocialist feminism (Koobak & Marling, 2014). This 'non-region' (Grabowska, 2012) has been theorised as catching up with the West, and presumed to be on the way to democratisation and Europeanisation – aspiring to be accepted in the West as the 'West' proper, yet not being the complete Other to the hegemonic West.

I suggest that it is within this logic that discussion of race and coloniality has come to focus predominantly on relationships between and within former colonies and metropoles. This kind of thinking, based on dividing the world into places 'with' race and 'without' (Baker, 2018), derives from the three-world meta-geography in which race is the domain of relationships between what have come to be called the 'first' and 'third' worlds. My analysis demonstrates that young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland is no exception to the global logic of coloniality and structures of race, as they construct Finland primarily as 'the West', embracing a division of the world into modern, less modern and non-modern spaces (Article I), and attempting to re-inscribe themselves into whiteness vis-à-vis non-white others following migration (Article IV).

Recalling questions asked by feminist scholars on the 'position' of postsocialism, where and how might young Russian-speakers who migrate to Finland, for whom the 'North' has turned out to be the 'West' (Boatcă, 2007), fit into discussions of postcoloniality and racial formation? My aim here is not to analyse the legacies of imperial relations between Finland and Russia, nor draw on a universal narrative of the postcolonial, nor simply include young Russian-speakers' migration within the well-established rubric (see also Tlostanova, 2017: 10-15 for critique). Instead, I argue that contemporary migration from post-Soviet states is embedded in the modern/colonial imaginary and material structures of the modern world, where Finland represents to my research participants the global 'West'. I argue that in order to analyse their identification with the 'West', 'Europe' and modernity through migration to Finland, and tie it to global formations of coloniality, whiteness and labour, there is a need to depart from the binary oppositions that structure conceptual thinking about the world.

In the next section, I draw on the notion of 'connection' (Bhambra, 2014) to show the interconnectedness of geographies typically thought to embody separate locations. I argue that in moving to Finland, imagined as 'the West', post-Soviet youth attempt to align themselves with modern space and time, and dis-identify from the 'non-West' and non-modern space of their home countries (Article I). I also discuss

how their inclusion in 'the West' takes place within Finland's racialised and gendered class structures of labour (Articles II and III).

3.2 Migration to the 'West' through the prism of connected sociologies

What does the phrase 'I have always dreamed of living in the West' mean to young Russian-speakers in Helsinki? What do they try to achieve by moving to Finland, and why do they think they can achieve it only by moving to 'the West'? These are particular imaginaries of the world that conflate 'the West' with modern space and time, mobilised in their use of 'the West' (Article I). These imaginings cannot be approached by analysing Finland and the individuals' home countries only as separate nation states. The question derived from their narratives is not what they wanted to do in Finland – a question that would be more relevant if the analysis were to start from a particular administrative 'migrant category' (e.g. labour migrant, migrant student). Rather, the question that emerges from the analysis is *where they want to be and imagined being* (Article I), and what resources they have to make this migration possible (Article II). The symbolic geographies to which they refer, their perceptions of themselves as white, and distinguishing themselves from less modern spaces and non-white Others (Article IV) derive from a globally connected world (Bhambra, 2014; Lowe, 1996). They thus engage in practices of identification and imagining that reach beyond the bounded localities of Finland and their home countries. In this section, I discuss the idea of 'the West' through the lens of postcoloniality, and particularly the interconnectedness of postcoloniality with postsocialism, and postcoloniality in the Nordic region.

In order to understand young Russian-speakers' imaginaries of the world, on which they act in migrating to Finland and identify themselves as white against non-white Others, I start from Bhambra's (2014) notion of connected sociologies (Bhambra, 2014; see also Baker, 2018). This concept is informed by the 'connected histories' perspective of Indian historian, Sanjay Subrahmanyam (1997). Young Russian-speaking migrants imagining Finland as part of the global 'West', making little distinction between Finland and the USA (Article I), and conceptualising themselves as aspiring 'Westerners' and 'Europeans' through migration should be placed within the broader connected histories that enable the idea of 'the West' and 'Europe' through the production of other geographical locations. As Gurminder Bhambra (2014b: 155) has argued, 'a sociology of connections […] takes seriously the histories of interconnection that have enabled the world to emerge as a global space'. My aim is to show how the postsocialist world is also included in this mode of connection and relations of postcoloniality vis-à-vis the 'West'. This requires going beyond the Cold War binaries of East/West, which are often evoked in analyses of postsocialism and postsocialist migrations, and looking into the mode that connects young Russian-speakers' imaginaries with the 'West' embodied by the metropolitan area of Helsinki. As Madina Tlostanova (2017: 11) has argued, the Cold War and its aftermath are too narrow a temporal focus to analyse the

construction of the East/West divide, as racialised hierarchies of power began much earlier than the capitalism versus socialism division. At the same time, the crushing of the socialist system symbolised the victory of neoliberal capitalist modernity, as a result of which the former Soviet Union republics have taken the position of the 'poor North', with a catching-up logic in relation to the global 'West', and have been expected to be educated into how to become fully human in a neoliberal way (Tlostanova, 2011).

Postcolonial and critical race theories have been crucial in showing how the 'West' has defined itself by designating colonised others and the 'East' as its polar opposite and constitutive outside (Said, 1974; Alatas, 1977; Mohanty, 1984; Mills, 1997; Hesse, 2007). The 'West' is an idea or mythical construct more than a delineated geography (Sakai, 2000: 789), yet it does have conrecte material effects. The modern world and modernity, as the remit of sociology (Bhambra, 2014), have been established through opposition between the 'West and the rest' (Hall, 1992). This critique has drawn attention to the idea of 'the West' as being established in the context of producing and maintaining a colonial system (Said, 1974; Bhambra, 2009). In fact, it was 'the Rest' that played a decisive role in the formation of the idea of 'the West', and 'the Rest' comes to reside in 'the West' itself. Thus, the West and the Rest are two sides of the same coin (Hall, 1992: 278), similar to Walter Mignolo's (2000) description of coloniality as a darker side of modernity. Hence, modernity/coloniality (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2000). These are not only the frontiers of 'the West' that can be contested, but the substance of 'the West' as a standard of civilisation, modernity and development in opposition to others is also contestable itself through its intimate connections with other spaces and geographies (Lowe, 2015). At the same time, the rise of 'the West' has been theorised as a capitalist project (Alatas, 1977; Robinson, 1983). It was created through differentiation and the production of difference to exploit non-European labour, summarised in the concept of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983). According to Black Marxist thought, capitalism has been always racial through its intricate connections with colonisation, slavery and the production of racial categories (Robinson, 1983). 'The West' is thus implicated in the imaginary and material structures of the *modern* world created through capitalism and colonialism.

Given that Finland was not a colonial empire in the age of empires and has occupied a precarious position on the East-West divide, whereas Russia has had its own colonies, a question asked in this thesis is what might arise from applying a post/decolonial lens to analysis of young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland as 'the West', their racialised position and their own production of whiteness? Although Finland may not belong to the context of core colonial empires and the uncontested 'West', the case of young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland illustrates the position on the edge of 'the West' and whiteness, and the promise of 'the West' represented by Finland, which itself has become part of 'the West' rather recently. Finland, a nation of only 5.5 million people of whom a little over 300,000 are foreign-born (Statistics Finland, 2018), is rarely imagined as a coloniser or as the centre of a modern/colonial world

system (Mignolo, 2000). However, the image of Finland and its capital, Helsinki belonging to the symbolic geographies of 'Westernness' and 'Europeanness' attracts young Russian-speakers to move to Finland to realise their potential as white, educated 'global subjects' and dis-identify from non-white Others and the non-modern spaces of their home countries.

Scholarship on (post)coloniality beyond the immediate presence of colonial power through the mode of *connection* (Bhambra, 2014; see also Hall, 1996) is an important starting point in thinking of coloniality as a legacy that structures spaces, imaginaries and knowledge beyond the bounded spaces of European imperial expansion (see also Mulinari et al., 2009). There is a tendency in postcolonial sociology to impose an artificial homogeneity on Europe, the West and whiteness, reducing it to a monolithic bloc (Virdee, 2019: 6; Sušová-Salminen, 2012; Dzenovska, 2018). While postcolonial scholars, basing their analysis largely on British colonial histories (see Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012 for a discussion), have importantly deconstructed the notion of 'the West' through its colonial domination, the *post* in postcoloniality should not be confused with a temporal understanding of 'what comes after colonialism' in a chronological sense (Sakai, 2000: 791; Hall, 1996; Go, 2018). Nor, as Stuart Hall (1996) has argued, does the term 'postcolonial' merely describes 'this' society rather than 'that', or 'then' and 'now'. Its theoretical strength, according to Hall (1996), lies precisely in its refusal to divide the world into 'then' and 'now'. Colonisation as key to modernity is an event of global significance, a transcultural 'global' process that until now has produced world hierarchies. The colonial matrix of power and the logic of coloniality must thus be central to analysis of *contemporary* global inequalities (Mignolo, 2000). I use Lisa Lowe's (2015: 8) understanding of coloniality not as a brute binary division between colonised and colonisers, but as a mode 'that operates through precisely spatialised and temporalised processes of both differentiation and connection'. I argue that it is in this context that young Russian-speakers' imaginaries of 'the West' as more modern and progressive spaces should be understood, embodied by Finland and the metropolitan area of Helsinki despite Finland's position on the edge of 'the West'.

Scholars have argued against racial exceptionalism in 'peripheralised' Europe – that is, dividing the world into areas where racism and colonialism are an 'issue' and where they are not (Baker, 2018: 11) – and against imagining countries outside explicit colonial histories as 'innocent' and 'historically white' (Mulinari et al., 2009; Imre, 2005; Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012; Baker, 2018; Wekker, 2016). Such research emphasises often-invisible participants in the (post)colonial order and crucially underlines the structures of coloniality as a global formation beyond the geographical borders of the colonisers and the colonised. Postcolonial critique beyond core colonial powers has analysed a colonially graded understanding of European space itself, and has drawn attention to areas that were not directly involved in European colonialism and yet have attempted to become identified with 'the West' and 'Europe proper' (Vuorela, 2009; Baker, 2018). As discussed later, this has been inadvertently linked to the structures of race. I draw

on this line of thought to place the case of young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland, imagined as 'the West' in the structures of coloniality and whiteness, to argue that their migration is structured by identification with Europe and whiteness, and claiming their own space in the global racial formation (Winant, 2001: 20).

Postcolonial theorising in Nordic countries has challenged the region's exemption from colonial and racial projects and from racism and whiteness (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012; Mulinari et al., 2009; Hübinette and Lundström, 2014; Habel, 2012).[10] Although Nordic countries are often thought of as outsiders to colonialism and racism, scholars working on postcoloniality have demonstrated links that connect Nordic countries to the knowledge and imaginaries that arose in the context and in support of colonial projects (Vuorela, 2009: 21, Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012). Nordic countries position themselves as part of the Western world with value systems stemming from the Enlightenment, and as being willing to forcefully defend these values (Mulinari et al., 2009: 17). Postcolonial critique in the region has, in fact, shown similarities between colonial powers and Nordic countries which were themselves under colonial rule. Nordic countries did adopt ideas of whiteness and race, despite their more marginal involvement in colonialism, at least compared with major colonial empires. These relations have been described through the notion of 'colonial complicity' (Mulinari et al., 2009: 17; Vuorela, 2009) – that is, 'the processes in which (post)colonial imaginaries, practices and products are made to be part of what is understood as the "national" and "traditional" culture of the Nordic countries'. This points to participation in hegemonic discourses, universalistic modes of thought and a desire to belong to the Western project. Thus, although peripheral to the metropolitan centres, Nordic countries have actively participated in and benefited from the production of and identification with Europe as the global centre (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012: 1). The imagery of colonialism, exoticisation, retention of racial stereotypes and caricaturisation of features in advertising and consumption have been represented as part of the national heritage of Nordic countries (Rossi, 2009; Danbolt, 2017), similar to Ann Stoler's (2002) and Anne McClintock's (1995) theorisation in relation to Western European imperial nations.

In addition, power works through racialised discourses and is embodied in gendered practices (McClintock, 1995). While constructing their own self-images as champions of gender equality, the discourse of gender equality is mobilised to create divisions between modern, civilised Nordic people and supposedly pre-modern, tradition-bound migrants (Keskinen, 2012: 73; Tuori, 2007, 2009). In this context, racialised migrant and minority women, such as women from Russia and other postsocialist countries, are confronted with sexualised and orientalised images of themselves vis-à-vis liberated Nordic

10 Although I use the term 'Nordic countries', I am aware of differing power relations within the region itself, as discussed later.

women (Sverdljuk, 2009; Diatlova, 2015), which points to similarities with how the so-called 'third world' and 'second world' have been constructed (Mulinari et al., 2009: 19).

Although many of these developments and trends are shared across Nordic countries, these countries are positioned differently in relation to whiteness and Westernness (Keskinen, 2014). While young Russian-speakers imagine Finland, an EU member state since 1995, as part of 'the West', Europe and global capitalist modernity, and attempt to reinscribe themselves into whiteness, Finland's belonging to 'the West' and whiteness is no longer so straightforward if a postcolonial and critical race lens is applied. Owing to its precarious position on the East–West divide and its racial categorisations, demarcations of racialised Others have been used to claim Finland's own belonging to 'the West' (Keskinen, 2019: 158; Urponen, 2008; Leinonen, 2017). Although master-narratives of the Finnish nation deny racism and construct the country as an equal nation, critical scholarship has argued that the racial imaginary has been integral to Finnish society (Keskinen, 2014; Vuorela, 2009; Tuori, 2009). Such research has challenged Finland's presumed racial exceptionalism, imagining itself as a 'historically white' and homogeneous nation where racism is a recent occurrence (Keskinen, 2014; Vuorela, 2009; Tuori, 2009; Tervonen, 2014; Seikkula, 2017; Näre, 2018). In addition, the Finnish sociological tradition has emerged as a nationalistic project and has contributed to the myth of a homogeneous Finnish people, and is thus connected with scientific racism (Näre, 2018).

Finland's belonging to whiteness and Europeanness has been produced at a cost. Although it is often thought of as innocent of racism and colonialism, racial thinking has played an important role in its nation building and construction of national identities (see Vuorela, 2009; Rastas, 2004; Mulinari et al., 2009). Classic European racial theorists of the nineteenth century assigned Finns to a lower status in racial hierarchies and categorised them as a non-white and non-European 'Mongolian race'. The impact of the 'Mongolian theory' reached as far as Finnish people abroad. Race emerged as an issue in debates on Finnishness in the early 1900s among Finnish migrants in the US (Huhta, 2014), with attempts to deny all Finns the right to naturalisation as US citizens on the racial grounds that Finns were 'Mongols' and thus ineligible (Huhta, 2014: 170; Kivisto & Leinonen, 2011: 12). In attempting to distance themselves from the 'Mongolian race', some Finnish anthropologists became involved in forceful counter-arguments to prove that Finns were white and racially unrelated to Mongolians. Producing Finns as white and belonging to Europe was based largely on racism against the indigenous Sámi people, the only indigenous people in the EU today. The Sámi continue to be subjected to direct processes of colonisation through theft of land and natural resources and industrialisation, as well as assimilation and separation (Andersen, Hvenegård-Lassen & Knobblock, 2015; Vuorela, 2009: 21). Consequently, the idea of racial order was firmly established in Finland, linking race and whiteness to nationhood (Rastas, 2004: 99). In addition,

racialised imageries deriving from colonial times do inform Finland's imagined location on the South-North, East-West continuum (Leinonen, 2017).

The master-narrative of Finland as a homogeneous nation state was also based on assimilating the Roma and Sámi people, with a wave of changing names into more 'Finnish' ones, and expulsions of Jews and Russians (Tervonen, 2014; Leinonen, 2012: 215). In the early twentieth century, building an independent Finnish nation was also based on discourses of a pure, homogeneous nation and the subsequent erasure of ethnic minorities. Eugenics gained ground in Finland in the early decades of the twentieth century to confirm the whiteness of 'the Finns' and 'enhance the quality of the population' (Tuori, 2009: 74). Heikki Waris's 1948 study, 'The Structure of Finnish Society' underlined Finns' 'racial purity' by stating that there were three small and insignificant racial minority groups – the Sámi, Romany and Jews – who were racially unrelated to Finns (Leinonen, 2012). Kivisto and Leinonen (2011) have demonstrated that arguments relating to Finns belonging to the 'Caucasian race' were still ongoing in the 1950s with the publication of *Finlandia: The Racial Composition, the Language, and a Brief History of the Finnish People*, sponsored by the Finnish American fraternal organisation. The book sought to convince readers that Finns are 'Caucasians' – anthropologically, politically and religiously. The 1951 Olympic Games and Armi Kuusela's crowning as Miss Universe were also important points in constructing Finland as part of whiteness, the 'civilised North' and belonging to Western Europe (Urponen, 2008). The whiteness of Finns was not taken for granted even in the postwar era (Urponen, 2008; Leinonen, 2017).

During the Cold War, Finland was seen as something of a grey zone between Western Europe and the USSR, being considered an ally to 'the East'. This in-between position led to concerns over the country's international representation and projections as part of the Eastern hemisphere and Russian proximity, against which Finland's belonging to the European cultural heritage and Westernness had to be highlighted (Keskinen, 2014). Finland's borderline position between East and West, and the narratives of marginality have played important roles in Finnish national identity construction (Browning and Lehti, 2007; Leinonen, 2017). Finland only became fully identified with Europe after the socialist regime collapsed and Finland joined the EU in 1995. Yet its ambiguous position across the East–West divide still haunts the national imaginary. Articulation of the boundaries of 'the West' and belonging to the West are animated around the figure of 'Russianness' (Puuronen, 2011). Russia and Russianness has thus also become a constitutive Other against which Finland's own belonging to the West is claimed.

These examples illustrate how Finland's construction as an independent nation was linked to the formation of whiteness. Race, as a cultural and political category rooted in the history of colonialism and slavery, has been central to the project of nation building, demonstrating how colonial effects have reached beyond areas that were directly colonised (Mulinari et al., 2009). Struggles for racial purity by

negating 'non-ethnically-Finnish' Others were centred around the idea of whiteness and proving belonging to 'the West' and Europe. This points to the inherent historical instability of whiteness and Westernness, and their dependence on other marginalised positions. Today's rise in neonationalist policies and racist activism in Finland, particularly in the aftermath of the arrival of a large number of asylum seekers in 2015-2016, has been conceptualised as a 'crisis of white hegemony' (Keskinen, 2019).

Existing scholarship on the postcolonial and race in the context of postsocialism and Central East Europe has analysed the inner-European demarcations of 'Europe', the orientalist production of 'the East' and the symbolic mapping of civilisation *within* the European continent (Chari & Verdery, 2009; Todorova, 1997; Boatcă, 2009; Wolff, 1994; Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 1992). While 'classic' postcolonial literature has discussed the construction of Europe and whiteness in relation to the non-white Other (Said, 1974), current scholarship has also discussed inner-European policing of the boundaries of Europeanness (Boatcă, 2007; Dzenovska, 2016, 2018). Within this demarcation of the boundaries of Europe, Orientalism and temporal borders can be applied within Europe itself: between Europe 'proper' and its Others (Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 1992; Wolff, 1994: 5). Against this backdrop, 'Eastern Europe' has been theorised as an intellectual construction and a product of the Enlightenment and Eurocentric science, the foundations of which are entangled with practices of colonial dominance outside Europe (Sušová-Salminen, 2012; Wolff, 1994). Western Europe has come to be considered as 'Europe proper' (Boatcă, 2010), while 'Eastern' has become antithetical to the noun 'Europe' (Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 1992: 9). Thus, not only has the Orient been created through opposition to the West (Said, 1974), but the idea of 'Eastern Europe' itself has been entangled with evolving Orientalism (Wolff, 1994: 7; Sušová-Salminen, 2012; Todorova, 1997). The 'moral geography' and 'geopolitical imaginary' are still at work in defining the boundaries of Europe today, regarding its unacknowledged contemporary borders in both the Atlantic and Caribbean, and the Eastern part of the continent (Boatcă, 2017). According to Boatcă (2010), the Orientalist imagery of East Europe's proximity to the Orient continues to shape today's categories of Western and Eastern Europe, and has made demarcation from the 'Orient' a key strategy for geopolitical identification with Europe for the latter. For Finland, dis-identification from the barbaric 'East' represented by Russia has been one strategy through which to claim its own belonging to Western Europe (Puuronen, 2011). This hierarchical grading of space in Europe has also been discussed by some migration scholars, who have argued that a teleological idea of progress may be at the centre of migration from postsocialist countries to Western Europe (Samaluk, 2015, 2016; Andreouli & Howarth, 2018).

In this context, racial hierarchies are actively involved in the construction of belonging to 'Europe proper' (Imre, 2005; Baker, 2018; Todorova, 2006; Rastas, 2004; Zorko, 2018). Aniko Imre (2005) has argued that, despite their supposed disconnectedness from colonial conquest, whiteness has been one of the least recognised and widely-used means to assert 'Europeanness' in Central and East European nations.

Similarly, Dace Dzenovska (2013) has analysed how postsocialist Latvia has attempted to re-inscribe itself into Europeanness by claiming colonial possessions as a ground for belonging to 'Europe proper'.

Writing on the position of Russia in the context of global coloniality, Madina Tlostanova (2003; 2017) has argued that Russia has been characterised by a simultaneous attachment to and rejection by Europe, being the Other both to the West and the radical non-West: 'With one eye directed toward Western capitalist Empires, Tzarist Russia, the Soviet Union and the current Russian Federation has had to keep the other eye directed towards its colonies, former colonies and satellites' (Tlostanova, 2003: 12). On the one hand, Russia has constituted itself as a colonial empire with a 'modernising' mission in relation to its own subaltern others (Tlostanova & Mignolo 2012). On the other hand, it has been considered as a not-quite-Western and not-quite-capitalist empire of modernity, 'a Janus-faced racialised empire' considered as the Other to the West. This captures the position of many participants in my research, from a white majority background in Russia, who lost their white privilege on migrating to Finland. Jennifer Suchland (2018) has further argued that Russia's post-Soviet imperial project has also been entangled with Eurocentrism. Accordingly, the East/West lens that continues to position Russia as opposed to the West fails to capture the fact that Russian political practices and identifications can also be cast *within* the Western episteme. Suchland (2018) has invited scholars to revisit the Cold War binary of East versus West which continues to position Russia as opposed to the West, and instead to look closely at Russia's entanglements with the Western episteme. This Eurocentric project has been inextricably positioned in connection with race, as post-Soviet Russia has constituted itself as a 'truly white' country carrying the 'white burden' of Europe, which has indulged itself in destructive multiculturalism (Zakharov, 2015; Sotkasiira, 2016).

Since the collapse of the socialist system, postsocialism has been further stigmatised as a failed project that must be guided into the only possible neoliberal capitalist modernity (Buchowski, 2006; Tlostanova, 2003: 7; Samaluk, 2016). Russia has come to be seen as the 'poor of the North' with its own South and East, yet refuses to be compared to the 'poor South' (Tlostanova, 2011). The postsocialist region has thus been portrayed as being on a 'journey' toward the West (Silova, Millei & Piattoeva, 2017). Discourses of the transition from socialism to capitalism have also been animated around Oriental others within the same nation – those who have been unable to adapt to the new capitalist reality, the 'losers of capitalist transformation' (Buchowski, 2006). Following Spivak (1989), these developments have invited the question 'Can the post-Soviet think?' (Tlostanova, 2015).

These theoretical contributions on coloniality demonstrate a 'desire to assimilate to the West' (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006: 213) and identify with whiteness beyond spaces that were at the forefront of colonialism. This discussion provides important conceptual tools to position young Russian-speakers'

migration to the West, embodied by Finland and Helsinki, within global connections that enable the idea of and identification with 'the West', whiteness and modernity. The idea of a globally connected world and histories (Bhambra, 2014) is a point of departure from methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002) in analysing young Russian-speakers' imaginaries of migration to Finland only as a country holding a particular attraction for young Russian-speaking migrants. Finland and its capital, imagined as 'the West', and post-Soviet countries are connected to the same project, which is entangled with modernity/coloniality (Mignolo, 2000). As decolonial scholars have importantly argued, colonialism and its legacies are relevant not only to former colonisers and colonised, but also to the entire structures of the contemporary capitalist world system (Quijano, 2000). The West and Europe have been implicated in 'moral geographies', with profound implications for the exclusion of others (Boatcă, 2010). This places Russian-speakers' migration to Finland within the globally connected histories of these formations (Baker, 2018: 16). How the world has been divided up into the 'West and the rest' shapes their expectations of what they will be able to achieve through migration to the West (Article I), as well as ideas of who can belong to the West (Article IV), and under what conditions (Articles II and III).

My aim here is not to include another region within the homogeneous and 'fashionable' area of the postcolonial (Shohat, 1992), nor to draw direct analogies with postcolonial migrations. Instead, I argue that young Russian-speakers' imaginaries and self-conceptions are embedded in the global world constituted through structures of race and coloniality. This is the mode of *connection* that ties both Finland and the former Soviet Union to the same world constituted through modernity/coloniality. To borrow from Mills (1997: 20), the Racial Contract as an actual historical fact is *global*. This is not to suggest that it is a universal narrative everywhere, but that it recognises 'the transnational and transcontinental connections that have shaped European history' (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012: 1; Lowe, 2015). This invites us to explore how these connections are played out in localised contexts of the global periphery of whiteness, such as Finland.

This research is also inspired by Miglena Todorova's (2006) research on *Race Travels*, which has analysed Bulgarian migration to the United States at the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Contrary to the idea that Eastern and Southern Europeans developed racial consciousness and adopted racist practices in reaction to American racial realities after migration, Todorova argues that Bulgarian migrants *brought* white racial self-identification with 'the West' and knowledge of racial hierarchies that transcended Bulgaria, the US and national spaces in general. Bulgarian migrants' claims to membership of whiteness and Europeanness after migration countered Western assertions of self-superiority and domination. These identities, Todorova (2006) shows, originated in a modern and connected world that enabled their self-identification with 'the West' and whiteness.

Against the backdrop of the 'global designs' (Mignolo, 2000) and imaginaries of 'the West and the rest' that structure their acts of migration, these are also the local and national practices that racialise and make them into migrant subjects. Global raciality accommodates many local racisms (Baker, 2018: 171). In other words, while this is 'the West' that they imagine (Article I), Finland as a nation state connected with the EU and the Schengen area regulates their migration (Article II), and the city of Helsinki governs their local practices of 'integration' and day-to-day encounters with the welfare/workfare state (Article III). Claims to belong to the West require, as my analysis argues, various forms of dis-identification and constant policing and maintenance of the boundaries of who can belong and, most importantly, under what conditions (Articles II and III). This brings me to discuss critical whiteness studies and connections between 'the West', race and labour to show that young Russian-speakers' experiences are not only structured by imagination, but are lived through very material effects.

3.3 Whiteness, gender and the production of difference in labour

But what on earth is whiteness that one should so desire it?

W.E.B. Du Bois (1920: 45)

In this thesis, I examine how young Russian-speakers imagine themselves as aspiring 'Westerners' and 'Europeans' through migration to Helsinki and attempt to bridge themselves to what they perceive to be more modern space of Helsinki (Article I). What processes turn them into migrants or unemployed or de-skilled workers? In order to analyse how young Russian-speakers' phenotypical whiteness does not protect them from racialisation as gendered 'migrant worker' subjects (Article III), and how they assert themselves as white vis-à-vis non-white Others (Article IV), I draw on the literature on critical race and whiteness. I examine connections between 'the West', race, migration and labour in the context of Finland. On the one hand, I analyse the racialisation of ostensibly white subjects through labour, as de-skilled and lower-skilled workers or as unemployed (Article II and III). On the other, I examine how young Russian-speakers themselves become active subjects of racialisation as they try to inscribe themselves into whiteness by racialising non-white Others (Article IV). This raises the important argument that racialisation, as a process of constructing, essentialising and fixing difference, is always relational (Miles, 1993). Whiteness is a key analytical concept through which to understand not only the construction of 'the West' vis-à-vis Others, but also the production of 'difference' and connections between race, gender and labour in migration. I discuss whiteness as connected with a worker identity, and that the production of difference, including racialised gendered difference (Articles II and III), is key to making and managing structures of labour.

The central contribution of critical whiteness studies has been understanding that all subjects, including 'often paranoid' white majorities, are involved in societies structured by racial dominance (Back, 2010:

445; Du Bois, 1920; Habel, 2012). Whiteness is alive among white subjects, regardless of whether or not they admit it (Dyer, 1997). Rather than being a matter of skin pigmentation, whiteness has been theorised as a structural position of advantage and privilege (Frankenberg, 1993), operating as a form of 'property' that needs to be policed, guarded and regulated (Harris, 1993).

The contemporary conflation of whiteness with Europeanness is based on the exclusion and marginalisation of non-European forms of whiteness. Alistair Bonnett (1998) has argued that Europeans invested heavily in defining themselves exclusively as white, while legitimising themselves as colonial and imperial powers, leading to the marginalisation of non-European forms of whiteness. Thus, in racialising Others, Europeans racialised themselves (see Miles, 1993). This points to an understanding of racialisation not only as directed at 'racialised others', but as a locus of hegemonic power in a relational process (Keskinen & Andreassen, 2017: 66). As the discussion on coloniality in the previous section has demonstrated, geographical areas that were not involved in the colonial conquest have also been implicated in identifying themselves with whiteness and Europeanness. However, the boundaries of hegemonic whiteness are heavily policed, and membership of whiteness may be undercut by class, ethnicity, accent and gender (Clarke & Garner, 2010). The case of Russian-speaking migrants in Finland, along with contemporary racialisation of Roma, Sámi and East European migrants (Fox, Moroşanu & Szilassy, 2012; Moroşanu & Fox, 2013; Van Baar, 2012) and European migrants who historically 'became white' in the context of the US (Ignatiev, 1995; Guglielmo & Salerno, 2003; Guglielmo, 2000), illustrate how phenotypical whiteness may not be enough to secure membership of hegemonic whiteness. This argument is in line with an understanding of racialisation which posits that 'the nominal absence of somatic difference does not get in the way of xenophobic racism; it turns out racialised difference can be invented *in situ*' (Fox, Moroşanu & Szilassy, 2012: 682; Moroşanu & Fox, 2013). Through multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, my research traces the 'production of difference' (Lowe, 1996: 28) and the making of young Russian-speakers into racialised, gendered migrant subjects.

The so-called 'third wave of whiteness studies'[11] has further explored white identity formations among migrant and racialised communities (Twine & Gallagher, 2008). Such work has analysed the strategic deployment of whiteness, and the production of whiteness among minoritised groups positioned at the margins of whiteness. Rather than being a white/non-white binary, whiteness is accordingly a geographically contextual phenomenon, a contingent social hierarchy granting differential access to economic and cultural capital, and intersecting with class, ethnicity (Clarke & Garner, 2010) and gender (Frankenberg, 1993; Lundström, 2014). In fact, contemporary research on the racialisation of whiteness in lifestyle migration has importantly highlighted how, despite their mobility, white British (Benson, 2012)

[11] See Twine and Gallagher (2008) for discussion of the waves of whiteness studies: the first wave is represented by the work of W.E.B. Du Bois (1920, 1935), and the second by authors such as Roediger (1991), Allen (1994) and Harris (1993).

and Swedish migrants (Lundström, 2014) are not considered to be 'migrants' owing to their relative class and racial privilege, unlike migrants from Eastern Europe (Moroşanu & Fox, 2013), for example. In Finland, young Russian-speakers' ostensible whiteness does not translate into social mobility following migration, as they become heavily affected by unemployment and lose their social status (Articles II and III).

Despite the important argument about the hierarchical construction of whiteness, the so-called third wave of whiteness studies (Twine & Gallagher, 2008), referring to bodies of work analysing the production of whiteness as hierarchical and unstable, has been critiqued for becoming a 'tsunami of whiteness studies' (Garner, 2017; Gallagher & Twine, 2017). This refers to the unreflexive use of the term, the re-centering of white people, being too inclusive, losing its initial purpose and focus, and failing to keep the promise of making structures of white supremacy visible (Back, 2010; Garner, 2017). As Les Back (2010) has also argued, the project of destroying white supremacy may easily become contiguous with the project of simply describing it. In addition, designating whiteness studies as a distinct area of research may distract our attention away from structural racism itself, leading us to 'give up' on Blackness (Back, 2010).

I argue that, in order to avoid analysis of whiteness by gazing at ostensibly white subjects like Russian-speakers in Finland, interconnected structures of class, labour and gender must be taken seriously. It is also worth asking what work racialisation accomplishes, and what materially-inscribed social realities people live through when they become racialised as non-white. In other words, under what conditions are young Russian-speakers allowed to become part of 'the West', and what do they attempt to accomplish in distancing themselves from non-white Others? In this thesis, I analyse how people live racialisation in terms of class and their class in racialised terms, as they talk about feelings of shame and out-of-placeness when disclosing their occupations and status to other people (Article IV). I argue that racialisation has concrete material effects on people and is always gendered (Article III). What inspires me in analysing whiteness is the ability to talk about relations of class and race at the same time (Roediger, 2017). Thus, race is a '*modality* in which class is "lived", the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and "fought through"' (Hall, 1980: 341). I argue that whiteness remains a useful analytical concept to understand the construction of a racialised worker identity if we keep relations of class, race and gender together.

Although whiteness studies have become increasingly institutionalised, it is often forgotten that this line of research has a longstanding tradition in a stream of research by Black activists and scholars working on race and class. Although largely unrecognised (Morris, 2015), one of the first studies in sociology was about race, white supremacy and the problem of the 'white worker'. In *Black Reconstruction of America*,

W.E.B. Du Bois (1935) coined the famous term 'wages of whiteness' to refer to how white workers embraced the racial identity of whiteness, rather than identified through class positions with recently freed enslaved people. According to Du Bois (1935: 700), white workers, especially those positioned at the social and economic margins, received economic and psychological 'wages' in the form of symbolic capital by distancing themselves from Black workers: 'the white group of labourers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white.' By organising along racial rather than class lines, white workers received the psychological and material wages of whiteness (see also Article IV).

In *The Souls of White Folk*, Du Bois (1920: 45) also argued that 'whiteness is a very modern thing – a nineteenth and twentieth century matter, indeed', tied to colonialism, exploitation of labour in the colonies, and the subsequent rise of Europe. It is here that the connections between whiteness, Europeanness and economic interests become visible. Whiteness was assembled precisely for the purpose of exercising political and economic privilege in the context of imperial expansion and colonial conquest (Hesse, 2007; Morris, 2015: 219). Far from being a natural, stable and unambiguous identity, whiteness was politically and socially produced through racial violence in relation to other groups in a racial hierarchy to secure economic, social and symbolic privilege (Gallagher & Twine, 2017: 1599). Thus, whiteness, although seemingly an invisible default racial category, deserves further analysis as a political category colonially assembled (Hesse, 2007) through structural racism and violence. The legacy of Du Bois' work transcends the borders of the US and shows the working of racialised modernity as a global historical structure (Itzigsohn & Brown, 2015).

This legacy later appeared in much more widely cited books by David Roediger (1991) and Noel Ignatiev (1995). Roediger (1991) analysed the choices of white workers to define themselves as 'not slaves' and 'not blacks' when processing their alienation as workers, thereby profiting economically and psychologically from the wages of whiteness. By adopting racist beliefs, migrant workers who occupied a middling racial identity between Blacks and Whites would gain the rewards of whiteness, which would arguably grant them social mobility. Roediger (1991, 2017) revealed gradations in migrant racialised categories over time, produced through labour. According to Ignatiev (1995), European migrants' assimilation into whiteness had less to do with skin colour itself, and more to do with state regulations and power. These examples are important in illustrating that membership requirements for whiteness have been historically rewritten over time, and that the borders of whiteness may be permeable, with Blackness remaining at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. Far from being a self-sufficient category, whiteness is thus dependent on other marginalised positions (Leonard, 2010). Critical scholarship on whiteness is thus a critique of the socially constructed and constantly reinforced power of white identifications and interests (Gillborn, 2015). Such work has also given rise to the notion of 'becoming

white' (Brodkin, 1998; Guglielmo & Salerno, 2003), informing some of the recent debates on East European migrants 'becoming white' through racism against others (Fox, Moroşanu & Szilassy, 2012; Fox, 2013; see Article IV for a critique).

Although I do not intend to draw direct analogies between historical analysis of European migrants 'becoming white' in the US and young Russian-speakers' racialisation in contemporary Finland, this thesis highlights how difference is made and managed to produce racialised worker identities, and how racism is structurally positioned within labour and capitalist relations. In summary, this work highlights how the production of difference and gradation of racialised migrant categories has been central to the development of capitalism: 'capital has maximized its profits not through rendering labour "abstract" but precisely through the social productions of "difference" […] marked by race, nation, geographical origins, and gender' (Lowe, 1996: 28; see also Virdee, 2019). The context of work and labour has been crucial in enabling the making of whiteness and superiority (see Leonard, 2010). Satnam Virdee (2014, 2019) has revealed a hierarchical re-ordering within Europe, and has argued in the context of Britain that multi-ethnic workers were differentiated and hierarchically re-ordered through imperial British nationalism and racialisation of the Irish. Understanding oneself as a worker was simultaneously connected with recognising oneself as white in relation to other non-white groups. The production of difference across racial lines and investment in whiteness (Lipsitz, 1998) have been central to claiming a worker identity. I argue that today's context of workfare capitalism, welfare chauvinism, and stigmatisation and racialisation of unemployment provides the backdrop against which such claims are made (Article IV).

Du Bois' (1920: 45) powerful question about the power of and desire for whiteness ('But what on earth is whiteness that one should so desire it?') guided my analysis of the construction of whiteness among Russian-speakers after migration. Why is it so important to associate oneself with whiteness and dis-identify from non-white Others? What does this tell us about connections between capitalism and racism? I answer these questions by discussing the production of a racialised logic of deservingness and respectability in the context of workfare, the individualisation of structural 'failure' and the need to demonstrate 'genuine' unemployment, referred to nowadays as neoliberal capitalism (Article IV). This global 'postsocialist condition' (Fraser, 1997) to which Chari and Verdery (2009) have also referred is the backdrop against which young Russian-speakers claim respectability and deservingness as unemployed and de-skilled migrants. The construction of Finland around the merits of the welfare state and the subsequent construction of citizenship through a work ethic have contributed to racialisation of unemployment, the particular target of which has been migrants and other racialised minority groups (Keskinen, 2016). Young Russian-speakers' attempts to dis-identify from an overdetermined, racialised migrant position and re-assert themselves as white reveal important connections between 'the West', race, deservingness and worker identity in migration under neoliberal capitalism.

This critique should be further expanded with feminist theorisation on the gendered and intersectional production of difference in migration. Racialisation as a way of constructing particular (working) bodies and fixing differences is a gendered process (Collins, 2000; Mohanty, 2003; Farris, 2017; Kofman, 2013). In other words, migration and labour are structured according to both the 'racial contract' (Mills, 1997) and the 'sexual contract' (Pateman, 1988). David Gillborn (2015) has argued that, with the focus of attention on racism in critical race theory, scholars tend to forget other dimensions of social structures. A similar critique has been directed against critical whiteness studies for their omission of gender in analysing whiteness (Ferber, 2007; but see Frankenberg, 1993; Lundström, 2014). Modalities of differentiation (Lowe, 1996: 28), with the gendered division of labour and gendered racialisation of the Other (Fanon, 1969), have been crucial to the production of labour. Silvia Federici's (2004) work on witch hunts and primitive accumulation suggests that the production of workers for capitalist societies has been based on social disciplining of women through the gendered division of labour and the division of workers across gender lines. These processes, Federici (2004) argues, took place simultaneously with the exploitation of women in the colonies. The bodies of women are absolutely central to the biological production of nation and labour, social reproductive labour, and both productive and unproductive labour (Skeggs, 2019).

Black feminist critique has made a crucial contribution to exploring interconnections between different systems of oppression and exploitation (Collins, 2000; Davis, 1981). This is not only about adding gender as another condition of power; seeing hierarchies of race and class as inherently gendered has also been a key conceptualisation of power in feminist intersectional critique (Cranshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000). Research on migration drawing on the notion of 'sexualisation of racism' has shown that racism, as a process of categorising certain groups of people and as a practice for their exclusion, may be based on simultaneous exclusion of the male and conditional inclusion of the female Other (Farris, 2017: 73). In addition, the discourse of gender equality itself may be used to produce difference between 'modern' and 'tradition-bound' people (Tuori, 2007, 2009; Keskinen, 2019). My observations in the youth career counselling service demonstrate that the production of difference through simultaneous racialisation and gendering is crucial to the production of gendered 'migrant worker' subjects. I discuss how racialisation operates according to a deeply gendered logic distinguishing between 'caring migrant femininities' and 'lazy disobedient masculinities' (Article III).

These bodies of work in dialogue with each other situate migration in the context of capitalism, structural racism and patriarchy, rather than 'integration' with the neutral nation state (Rajaram, 2018; Farris, 2017). The particular condition under which young Russian-speakers experience themselves as racialised migrant subjects, rather than as 'Europeans' or 'Westerners' as they imagine themselves, is that of unemployment or predominantly de-skilled work. In addition, racialisation takes place by constructing

them through a gendered set of skills (Article III). Their racialised and gendered class and labour market positions, as well as their inability to be recognised as respectable middle-class workers, become key concerns following migration. The structures of workfare further target racialised and migrant groups as disposable labour, even if they achieve formal citizenship rights and gain access to welfare. It is on condition of unemployment and lower-skilled work that their imagined futures in the 'West' become possible. In this context, their investment in whiteness by distancing from non-white Others becomes a way to distinguish themselves from their overdetermined 'migrant' position as 'welfare scroungers' or manual workers (Article IV).

4. A Multi-Sited Ethnography of Young Russian-Speakers' Lives in Helsinki

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology of my research and ways in which I was an active part of the field I was researching. Through ethnographically-grounded research, I analyse young post-Soviet migrants' conceptions of themselves as aspiring 'Westerners' and 'cosmopolitans', and discuss how they are made into racialised labouring subjects, as well as how they attempt to reinscribe themselves into whiteness.

Ethnography is a method that combines theoretical positions and political intent, in that it is participant-centred and provides a rhetorical space for those who may not have access to 'circuits of knowledge distribution' (Skeggs, 1997: 39). In this research, I conducted participant observations in integration, language, CV courses and career counselling, and semi-structured interviews with 54 young Russian-speakers in the Helsinki capital region, and stayed in close touch with five key research participants.

The epistemological premise of this research is that ethnographic truths are inherently partial, committed and incomplete, which requires ethnographers to 'dislodge the grounds, from which persons securely represent others' (Clifford, 1986: 7). I understand James Clifford's statement as an invitation to recognise that the ethnographic field and its research findings are constructed by the ethnographer and her choices, and are a result of personal relationships with those with whose lives the researcher engages. As Ruth Behar (1996: 5) has insightfully put it, 'nothing is stranger than this business of humans observing other humans in order to write about them'. As a craft of witnessing (Behar, 1996) and listening (Back, 2007), ethnography is possible only from the perspectives available to researchers.

Feminist theorisation has crucial epistemological implications for how researchers relate to the field and produce knowledge (Harding, 1987; Smith, 1987; Haraway, 1988; Skeggs, 2001). The premises of value-free, detached and universal knowledge have been challenged by this critique. My research practice is informed by this epistemological recognition that all knowledge is situated and interpretative. Feminist scholars have extensively critiqued researchers' disembodied and detached positions in the field as a requirement for the production of 'objective knowledge', an idea produced by the Enlightenment and subsequent Western belief in the ability to order and control the world in a rational way (Skeggs, 2001). Instead, as Sandra Harding (1987; 1995) has importantly argued, disclosing the position from which the researcher produces knowledge actually increases the 'objectivity' of research, unlike 'objectivism' which hides evidence from the reader. According to this understanding, ethnographers appear as active and embodied participants in social relations taking place during their fieldwork. These arguments demystify researcher and researched as unattached and neutral subjects. Importantly, they trouble the binary distinction in the research process, whereby 'the self' analyses the other (Abu-Lughod, 2008). I therefore understand the 'field' not as a specific and bounded physical site, but as a 'cluster of embodied dispositions and practices' (Clifford, 1997: 69). This critique of the researcher's disembodied position in

the field suggests that it is only by opening up the process through which researchers produce data that the validity of their findings can be ensured (Harding, 1987; Haraway, 1988). In summary, following Dorothy Smith (1987: 106), 'both the subject matter and "the head" that theorises it as well as theorising are enfolded in the existence of our subject matter'.

Although I would prefer to avoid excessive self-examination in this chapter, my position as a young Russian migrant and how my research participants saw me says a lot about how they want to be seen in Finland themselves. My own positionality as a Russian migrant with a background of growing up in a town bordering Finland made me reflect on how I might avoid only telling 'local' and 'interesting' stories about 'my' people, and instead understand their position from the perspective of intertwined relations in the spatially constructed world.

In what follows, I position myself in my fieldwork and the academic field of research on migration. I then discuss the workings of insiderness/outsidersness in my fieldwork, access to the field, the ways some of my research participants positioned me as a 'non-Russian' or *intelligentsia* and what it says about the subject matter I was researching. I discuss how my social class worked as methodological capital (Gallagher, 2000) enacting the field. After this, I describe the process of doing observations in integration, CV, language courses and career counseling, and thematic interviews, followed by translation, analysis and ethical questions. I conclude the chapter by demonstrating how whiteness emerged as one of key concepts in this thesis, and discuss the process of doing research at the global periphery of whiteness.

4.1 'Local scholars' and 'natives' in the academic field

I grew up in the small town of Sortavala in Russia, which belonged to Finland until World War 2. Sortavala is just 65 km from the Russian-Finnish border. The town's Finnish past and proximity to Finland are visible in its architecture, as well as in daily transnational mobility across the border. My former school is an old Finnish building, one of the town's landmarks. As a child, I was taught the names of the Finnish architects who had planned the town's landmark buildings. In fact, the Russian-Finnish border is easily visualised in my head as a long strip of cleared forest, which you see as you drive slowly across the border between Finland and Russia. As a child, I was excited to see how the colour and structure of the asphalt would suddenly change on entering Finland or Russia. 'Suomi, Finland, European Union' – the sign would welcome you to Finland. As might be expected, the border's proximity produced opportunities for migration (Davydova & Pöllänen, 2011). Three of my school classmates migrated to Finland with their families in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and ten years later, our paths crossed again when I moved to Finland myself.

I moved to St Petersburg to pursue a university degree. My background of coming from a small border town only positioned me as a girl from the Russian province, placed as foreign to the 'capital of culture'

in Russia. It was not until 2012, when I moved to Helsinki to do a Master's degree, that my past life across the Finnish border became salient in my life once again. Similarly to many of my research participants, I envisioned myself as an international student and as a highly educated person sufficiently worthy to study abroad. Clearly, Finland – although not Helsinki itself – was familiar to me, and I expected the people I was going to research to be familiar to me too.

Despite my personal transnational connection with Finland, when I started my PhD research in 2014, I knew very little of young Russian-speakers' lives in Helsinki. My social networks consisted mainly of other international university students, some Finnish and a couple of Russian friends. I later came to realise that my experience of moving to Helsinki to do a Master's degree followed by a PhD sometimes positioned me differently from my research participants. Most importantly, I was protected by an English-speaking international programme, and privileged by a lack of need to search for a job to make a living. In addition, I had never participated in the cultural lives of Russian-speaking people in Finland. Despite having long personal connections with Finland, it became clear to me that I did not have clear access to the field, and that I needed to find entries into the lives of other Russian-speaking youth. Despite coming from the same country, or even the same region, I did not enter the field as an 'insider'. I thus begin my analysis with an assumption that there is no monolithic insider or outsider view.

Reflections on the researcher's positionality are crucial for the production of knowledge, yet this does not solve the problem that some academic voices are positioned stronger than others, just as knowledge is re-inscribed in 'stronger' languages (Asad, 1986). When a researcher has a degree of cultural proximity to the field of study in migration research may often be a disadvantage rather than an advantage within the global division of academic labour. As anthropologist Xiang Biao (2011) has argued, while scholars from the 'Western world' travel and theorise the world, researchers from 'developing countries' are expected to specialise in their own 'home' topics, a condition also described by scholars from post-socialist countries in terms of division into 'local scholars' and 'global experts' (Pasieka, 2014; see also Buchowski, 2004; Cervinkova, 2012; Tlostanova, 2015). As Tlostanova and Mignolo (2012: 11) have put it, non-Western scholars are positioned as having interesting stories and experiences to tell about 'their' people, while the actual social scientific theorisation and knowledge is produced by hegemonic white scholars writing about Otherness. From this arose my intention to theorise young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland through intertwined relations in the spatially constructed world (article I), going beyond area studies or methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

Before outlining the processes through which I produced my data, I also position myself within the academic field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), and specifically within the field of migration research. The feminist epistemological critique of the binary of the subject and object of study (Smith, 1987) is challenging to migration research, which relies on the existence of an objectified 'migrant' category. While

any empirical research involves some kind of 'participant objectivation' (Bourdieu, 2003), it is only by objectifying certain populations as 'minorities' or 'migrants' that research on migration can be carried out and institutionalised. Migration research is based inherently on naturalisation of the categories and logic of the nation state (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Without the formation of the modern nation state, there would not be any research on migration and integration (Dahinden, 2016: 2208). Migration research then may become complicit in institutionalising, naturalising and managing migrants' 'difference' from citizens, overlooking other subjectivities that are meaningful to people (Näre & Holley, 2015). This raises the further question of the complicity of knowledge with power (Foucault, 1981), and the use of social sciences and knowledge to govern and control populations (Said, 1974; Go, 2014, Essed & Nimako, 2006).

How, then, could I avoid becoming complicit in the logic of the nation state, or what Essed and Nimako (2006) refer to as the 'minority research industry', when carrying out research on young Russian-speakers in Helsinki? Designation of my research participants in Helsinki as 'Russian-speakers' might be critiqued for reproducing the same logic of the specific ethnic semantic of difference (Dahinden, 2016: 2211). However, rather than starting with a 'migrant' category or a specific 'post-Soviet' or 'Russian experience', this research is about the processes that make people 'migrant' subjects, and how they challenge the classificatory practices that position them in society (see Skeggs, 1997; Tyler, 2013). Du Bois' (1969) 'double consciousness' clearly explains how people's conceptions of themselves may be incompatible with the ideas and knowledge of the dominant society: 'Russianness' or 'migrancy' may not be key categories through which they see themselves, but they become defined through these categories at certain stages of their lives through racialisation. My key concern was thus to analyse not 'young Russian-speaking migrants' experiences', but rather the workings of the system that constitutes their experiences as racialised migrant subjects (see Scott, 1991: 779).

4.2 Negotiating insider/outsider position and entering the field again... and again... and again

In his classic ethnography in Chicago, William Whyte wrote the following on his access to the field:

> I found that my acceptance to the district depended on the personal relations I developed far more than any explanations I might give. Whether it was a good thing to write a book about Corneville depended entirely on people's opinions of me personally. If I was all right, then my project was all right; if I was no good, then no amount of explanation could convince them that the book was a good idea. (Whyte, [1943]1993: 300).

Whyte's experience of entering the field resembled mine in many ways. My access to and position in the field, and the data produced, were defined by the relationships I developed with my research participants throughout my fieldwork. My ethnography was not spatially designated as a specific physical location in

Helsinki, neither was there a single site that I could 'enter' or become part of. My fieldwork was constituted by negotiating personal relationships, and was inherently multi-sited. My position of insiderness/outsiderness, as a young Russian migrant in Helsinki myself, was crucial not only in gaining access to the field, but also in understanding how my research participants wanted to be seen themselves.

Feminist discussion of the troubling binaries of subjectivity/objectivity and observer/observed is an important starting point for discussing questions of insiderness and outsiderness in research. Existing debates have importantly argued that there is no totally insider or totally outsider position in ethnographic research (Ramji, 2008; Ganga & Scott, 2006; Voloder & Kirpitchenko, 2014). The dual concepts of strangeness and familiarity fail to engage with the complexity of research experiences. As Amanda Coffey (1999: 29) has beautifully put it, researchers analyse a 'peopled field', which means that ethnographers establish relationships with others, and 'fieldwork is guided by the relationships that are built and established over time', mirroring the complexities of everyday human interactions.

In migration research, it is sometimes assumed that researchers' ethnicity and migration history, thus sharing membership of a social group with the research participants (Nowicka & Cieslik, 2014), are enough to gain 'insider' status. This may reproduce nation-states as units of analysis, and methodological nationalism as a purveyor of research on migration (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2003). My fieldwork demonstrates that positions of insiderness are not given; instead, different positions, ascriptions and categorisations are produced during the fieldwork.

The fact that I was a young Russian female migrant in Helsinki myself certainly facilitated my fieldwork in terms of entering the field and conducting interviews in my research participants' native - and in few cases one of the native - language. However, rather than claiming 'insider' status based on my own migration history, age and nationality, I unpack the conditions and instances under which difference and proximity were constituted and what this says about the subject I was researching. As argued by others, the points of connection between researcher and research participants in the research interaction are not pre-established and guaranteed by commonalities of ethnicity and 'culture', but must rather be worked for (Ramji, 2008; Ganga & Scott, 2006).

When starting my fieldwork in August 2014, I faced the question of how to construct and delineate my 'field', since my field of study did not deal with a clearly bounded group in a single place, and could not be found 'somewhere out there'. It had to be constructed by me, which meant that I had to decide what sites were crucial to the understanding of the lives of young Russian-speaking people. At the same time, the field was constructed by the state that channeled migrants to the integration and language courses, as well as labour activation to make them more 'employable' through de-skilling. One of my strategies was to gain access through informal sites and networks of young Russian-speakers in Helsinki, which meant

that, similarly to Whyte's experience, my acceptance in the field depended largely on my development of personal relationships with my participants. I started by joining social media groups organised by Russian-speaking migrants and identifying key places that might relate to my research participants in the Helsinki metropolitan area. I soon established that some young Russian-speakers were organising a gathering in one of the bars, and this was my first opportunity to gain access to the field. However, the fact that I am Russian myself did not mean that people had any interest in me. Attending the physical site of a bar did not mean that I was accepted into the informal space, or that other people wanted to talk to a complete stranger, as my field diary reads:

> I knew only one person in the crowd. I introduced myself to the people around him and shook hands, but no one seemed to be interested in talking to me. Everyone went on doing their own business, and I stayed alone in the middle of the hall. I tried to start a conversation with two people – I joined them and said I was doing research – but soon one of them left, and I stayed with a very shy Finnish person who did not speak English (August 2014).

Everyone seemed to have known each other for a long time, and I clearly looked like a new person at that party. The fact that I was a co-national with many of them mattered much less than the fact that I was an outsider from this group of friends enjoying their time together. Although I was sharing the physical space with other young people, it did not mean that others were interested in my presence or wanted to talk to me. While researchers do have considerable power in choosing their perspectives on the researched subject, research participants can also exercise power by not talking to and ignoring the researcher. The fact that I was interested in them had little significance until the people I was researching became interested in me.

During the same evening, I met Ilya[12], whom I mention in article I. As I introduced myself to this young man, it became clearer to me more than at any other moment that research is an embodied endeavour (Coffey, 1999). I wrote down his reaction in my field diary: 'Are you Russian? But you really don't look Russian! I like it so much that you don't look Russian.' In this case, it was what Ilya saw as my assumed embodied 'non-Russianness' that worked as methodological capital (Gallagher, 2000) to establish initial contact. His reaction to my supposed 'non-Russianness' provoked many thoughts on why it had such a positive value in that setting. Although one might think that my alleged 'Russianness' would have established a degree of rapport with my research participants, it was my identified 'non-Russianness' that worked as capital in that setting. Ilya went on to explain that he did not look Russian either by showing me pictures of himself on his phone. Why was it so important for Ilya to identify himself and me in these terms? This highlights the methodological implication that points of connection during fieldwork may

[12] All names are pseudonyms.

be unexpected. Presumably, what he perceived as my 'non-Russianness' could refer to me working in the university and speaking fluent English with other people that came to embody dis-identification with racialised 'Russianness'. Ilya's vision of me said something important about how some of my research participants wanted to be seen themselves. Analysis of this encounter became the basis for the discussion in article I.

Later, Ilya introduced me to his friends. I would find out about the events they were visiting through social media, but I was never actively invited there. I visited events that they organised, such as concerts and home gatherings. My presence was politely welcomed but somehow questioned: why had a new person suddenly appeared in their group? I felt that my presence in their group looked strange, as I had not been part of their close friendship and previous experiences together. However, it was through these informal meetings and conversations that I learnt about their vision of Helsinki as a path to Europe when they were discussing the easiness of travelling to other countries from Helsinki airport, their plans to get a European passport and the chance to become 'cosmopolitan' through making friends with other (white) foreign people (Article I) – the things they thought they would not be able to achieve in home countries.

I soon found out about a birthday party for Denis, whom I already knew by that time. I again thought that I might easily merge with a group of other young Russian-speaking people. In this case, my presence in a club as a lonely young woman positioned me in sexual terms. I always introduced myself as someone doing research, and I had some involved conversations with a couple of young males when I asked about their lives. It was only later that I realised that my presence in the club was interpreted as me trying to find a partner. It did not matter what kinds of explanation I gave about my research; my research participants were actively involved in constructing and interpreting my presence in the field in their own terms.

Sara Ahmed (2000) has written that centuries of colonialism and ethnographic practice have designated ethnographers as knowers, and 'objects' of research as strangers who have 'interesting stories' to tell. At the beginning of my research, I felt that these power relations were somewhat inverted, and that I was positioned as a stranger and an outsider from long-established networks of friendship. Although I came from the same country, and sometimes even the same region, my supposed 'insiderness' as a young Russian person mattered much less than my 'outsiderness' from the networks of friendship. My Russianness was far from certain to establish immediate connections. These instances suggested that any attempt to reduce young Russian-speaking migrants to the researched or dominant 'migrant' categories (see Dahinden, 2016) would be problematic and would meet resistance, as my research participants were redrawing the boundaries of my own presence and inclusion in the field.

It was not until I visited a workshop on finding employment at the end of October 2014 that I finally managed to establish closer connections with my research participants since unemployment and de-skilling were one of the key themes they wanted to discuss. The workshop took place in a Russian-community NGO in the metropolitan area and aimed to help Russian-speakers find jobs in Finland. Although I introduced myself as a researcher and expected to take a position as a participant observer, I was invited to be actively involved in the discussions. All the participants in the workshop were highly educated women, including a clinical psychologist, a teacher, an economist, a philologist and a political scientist. This is where I met Olga, whom I joined on the way to the train station after the workshop. She immediately told me her story as we got on a train: how she had moved to Finland as an au pair and had then stayed to study in Helsinki, combining her studies with work. Olga seemed very interested in my research, as the questions of residence permits, de-skilling and dignity at work seemed key themes about which she wanted to talk. She kept on repeating: 'I had to do this (cleaning) work to get my permit, but on the residence permit card they wouldn't write that my occupation is a cleaner.' This highlighted that employment is tied to securing regular residence in Finland (Article II). I came to realise that the question of status mobility was central for many people like Olga. Young Russian-speakers' experiences are stratified according to the migration channels they used in order to move to Finland, as I discuss in Article II.

A couple of weeks later, Olga invited me to her place, where she introduced me to her friends. A prepared dinner was waiting for me as I entered her home. After that evening, I started to visit Olga's home regularly when she invited her friends and me. During these visits, we would discuss various topics, such as life in Helsinki, friendships, relationships and work. She later introduced me to other people whom I could approach for my research. This close longitudinal engagement with my research participants in informal settings allowed me to participate in their daily lives and mundane everyday discussions. Clearly, I did not develop close relationships with all the research participants; these participants were actively choosing and observing me, deciding whether I was of any interest to them, and allowing me to become part of their mundane day-to-day discussions. Ethnographic fieldwork is distinctive in the fact that relationships of intimacy and familiarity between researcher and researched are the 'fundamental medium of investigation', rather than a by-product of research practice (Amit, 2000: 2). I also realised that, in the absence of strong networks among the majority Finnish population, friendship was an invaluable source of material and moral support for many young Russian-speaking people in Helsinki.

4.3 Social class as methodological capital

The reason why I became close to some and not others was revealed one evening while I was visiting Olga's place. Olga and Inna told me: 'We were searching for some *intelligentsia* person in our little group – just like you, Daria.' In making this claim, Olga and Inna positioned not only me but, more importantly,

themselves in terms of social class. It was important to them to be recognised as respectable and university-educated subjects – a position denied to many following migration to Finland. My perceived social class became a form of methodological capital (Gallagher, 2000), which enabled me to enact the research field and establish rapport with Olga and her friends. What they saw as shared points of connectedness importantly revealed my research participants' conceptions of themselves. Through these frequent references to respectability (Skeggs, 1997), it became clear to me that loss of a respectable work-based identity and inability to be recognised as skilled professionals in the Finnish labour market were central issues in the lives of the people I was studying. I came to realise that these references to their social background produced a strong sense of how they wanted to be positioned and seen by others. While not possessing economic capitals before migration, they expected that their cultural capitals, education and skills would be recognised and transferred after migration. This is why the theme of whiteness, which also emerged in the interviews as both a classed and racialised experience, emerged in my analysis (article IV), as much as it being meaningful to my research participants.

These examples show that although, as a researcher, I had power to choose perspectives on my analysis, I had little or no control over being classified, gendered, racialised and sexualised by my research participants. It would be insufficient simply to state that I was positioned in the field as a Russian, university-educated woman. I could have not foreseen that my research participants would see me as a 'non-Russian' or belonging to the *intelligentsia*. These dimensions signal the ways they wanted to be seen themselves, namely, as white, highly-educated 'Westerners' doing respectable work. These were the categories that mattered to my research participants as they tried to dis-identify themselves from postsocialism, Russianness, unemployment, labour activation or de-skilled work.

At the same time, comments on my embodiment as a researcher, like perceived cultural capital, implied that other people may have not identified with my own perceived background in the same ways as Olga and her friends. While my connections with Olga's group were key to my fieldwork, I tried to use as many different ways to access the field as possible, in order to meet people from different backgrounds and with different migration histories, to which I turn below.

4.4 Carrying out observations in integration courses

As I became more familiar with the field through the people I met, I realised that the lives of Russian-speaking migrants – especially unemployed and recent migrants – were structured by multiple institutional sites, such as the employment office, labour activation sessions, integration courses, and CV and language courses. I decided to follow these people across sites that were significant to their employment and lives in Helsinki. My fieldwork followed multiple sites of neoliberal racialisation such as labour activation, integration, language and CV courses. By following the sites of integration, language and CV courses, I traced the production of de-skilled labour and activation of the racialised 'undeserving' unemployed.

Thus, my fieldwork involved moving between observations in both institutional settings and informal settings such as home gatherings, combined with thematic interviews.

First, in early spring 2015, I attended an integration course to carry out observations and recruit research participants. Negotiating access to institutional sites turned out to be a very different experience from that in the informal sites described above. When I talked to the administrators and course teachers, my positioning shifted from a fellow national to a 'migrant', as I had to negotiate access in Finnish, which I speak with an accent and worse than English. I quickly realised that any language other than Finnish was unwelcome in these settings, and I felt that I could not be an exception to the rule, even though I knew that the teachers and administrators could speak English.

I explained to the school's administrator that I would like to spend some time in their lobby having short conversations with the students during breaks. I said that my research was about migrant employment in Finland, and that I was interested in knowing about people's experiences of and plans after the integration course. One teacher quickly nodded, brought me to her class, and addressed some of the students: 'You [name], you and you, who worked in Finland, go to the corridor. Daria wants to do an interview with you.' At that moment, in horror, I quickly learnt the lesson that no matter what researchers' intentions are in the field, it is about how other people understand and interpret their aims and presence in the field. I also realised the role of gatekeepers in such settings, and their power to define the terms of my fieldwork. Calling out the students to talk to me in the corridor was a routine but powerful gesture, negating any 'participant consent', so the only thing I felt like doing with these people was engaging in small talk about the weather in Finland and learning that 'Daria' means 'sea' in Persian. Obviously, I did not conduct any interviews. Instead, I realised how easily 'migrant' subjects can be objectified and infantilised through various orders, decided upon and channelled to engage with authorities for another 'interview'. This gesture of calling out people for an interview reminded me of how research itself may work as a subjectifying technology (Näre & Holley, 2015).

For the next couple of days, I spent time in the integration school's lobby and canteen, making contact with people, doing ethnographic interviews and meeting them outside school hours. Spring was a time when the people attending the course were preparing for a job practice in order to learn about 'Finnish work life', so they enthusiastically shared their feelings about how they perceived working for free in Finland.

Over the next few months, I visited other language and CV courses, which I learnt about from the interviews and information on services for migrants. Russian-speaking people often constituted the majority of people attending the courses. I aimed to spend time with my research participants during coffee and lunch breaks or after the courses, conducting ethnographic interviews or recruiting them for

thematic interviews. My participants were willing to talk to me, and would always invite me to join them during coffee breaks. I spent a week on an integration course and a week on a CV course. I also attended job fairs organised by the employment office for unemployed youth (N=3), discussions on how to find jobs in Finland for migrants, which took place in public libraries (N=2), and job fairs for young people organised by the city of Helsinki (N=2). For two months, I attended weekly discussions on job searching organised by a Russian NGO.

During coffee and lunch breaks in the language and CV courses, I observed and participated in discussions about their plans, educational and job search strategies, other language courses and news from the employment office. 'What to do next' was a common theme during breaks. I realised that such discussions provided invaluable support networks and spaces where people could share information and rumours, and their own and friends' experiences, and discuss future strategies. During these gatherings, I was often asked what my research findings revealed, and whether anyone had managed to find a job that matched their qualifications. I felt that these questions were addressed to me not only out of interest, but in the hope of receiving a positive answer.

Writing field notes in these settings consisted of first making jottings or writing down some key phrases and themes on my mobile phone (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). Then, on public transport, at home or at university, I would develop the jottings into detailed descriptions of what had happened in the settings and my reflections on them, and saved these in a computer file.

4.5 Conducting participant observations in youth career counselling

The context of activating labour market policies targeting unemployed youth was highly relevant to my research. Many unemployed Russian-speakers were channelled toward the youth career counselling office as part of the labour activation scheme. Youth career counselling was therefore one of the key sites of my fieldwork (Article III). My research was part of a project entitled 'Migrant Youth Employment: Politics of Recognition and Boundaries of Belonging' (PI Lena Näre, funded by Kone, Emil Aaltonen and University of Helsinki), so initial access to the setting was negotiated through the project with Lena Näre and Lotta Haikkola. I conducted participant observations in a youth career counselling office in Helsinki from April 2015 to January 2016. I observed a total of 35 meetings of young clients with career counsellors, and other events (N=9) that took place as part of youth activation. Most of the meetings I observed were with Russian-speaking people, but I also observed encounters with other Finnish and foreign youth (N=11). While attending work and education fairs organised at the counselling office, I conducted ethnographic interviews with the young people, employers and school representatives. Russian-speakers were the largest minority group attending the career counselling service. Most counsellors were of white Finnish background, with higher education in sociology, social work or youth work. The meetings I observed lasted 30 minutes, and were held in Finnish and Russian, as one of the

counsellors spoke Russian. As Finnish is not my first language, if I did not understand particular words or phrases during the young people's meetings with the counsellors, I asked the counsellors for clarification and translation afterwards.

Before starting my observations, I disseminated leaflets with my contact information in the lobby. At the beginning of every meeting, I introduced myself to the young person and asked permission to observe the meeting. All but one allowed me to be present at their meetings. I decided not to use a recorder during the observations, but made fieldnotes in my diary during the meetings, or recorded oral notes on my way from the meetings. I felt that a recorder would place even more pressure on the young people, as they were already in a very unequal power setting. They were being constantly evaluated and pressured to apply for study places and jobs, and they might lose their unemployment benefits if they failed to comply with the counsellors' demands.

The organisation and politics of space reflected the dynamics of power in this setting. All the meetings took place individually in closed rooms, with the counsellor sitting at a desk in front of a computer and the young person sitting in front of the counsellor. I decided to sit on the side of the young person. The fact that I spoke Russian disturbed some power relations when I was present in the counselling meetings. In fact, the young people were friendly and seemed to welcome having me at the meetings, and the conversations between the counsellors and their young clients proceeded with little or no reference to my presence. The young Russian-speakers would sometimes talk to me in Russian in front of the Finnish career counsellors, commenting on what was going on. Exchanging comments in Russian was also a way to fill silent pauses accompanied by the noise of the counsellors typing on their keyboards. The fact that I was usually younger than the counsellors and not originally from Finland positioned me similarly to the young people attending the office – although I was not unemployed. As there was limited time and space to talk to the young people during the counselling, I offered to meet them later outside the counselling to learn about their reflections. Spatial politics were important when interviewing the young people I met at the counselling, as I did not want to be associated with the bureaucratic setting that had power to cut their social assistance.

During lunch breaks, the counsellors insisted on talking to me in Finnish, although I had mentioned that I felt more comfortable speaking English. As a result, I felt that I interiorised the demand that the young migrants should speak Finnish in the career counselling, which was similar to my experience of conducting observations in the integration courses. Because of this, I often avoided spending free time with the Finnish counsellors, preferring to talk to one of the counsellors who spoke Russian. This fact of being positioned as a young migrant with non-native Finnish skills enabled me to experience some of the power relations going on in the counselling office, such as communicating with welfare bureaucrats in a language I was still learning, although I was not threatened by losing unemployment benefits. In

being recognised as a 'migrant' in the setting because of my language skills – or, maybe simply having interiorised this feeling – I experienced something of the conditions under which young Russian-speakers conduct their lives. This explains why my fieldnotes from the counselling office contained more of my own reflections on how I felt in the field than my notes from other settings.

While observing the meetings and other events at the counselling office, I wrote down key phrases and descriptions from the dialogues between the counsellors and the young people. I was interested in how the young people's skills were recognised, which educational and job sectors they were channelled toward, and how they resisted the categorisations offered. On returning home or to the university, I developed the jottings in my copybook into more detailed fieldnotes in a computer file.

4.6 Thematic interviews

In addition to analysing gendering, racialising and classificatory practices in the institutional settings described above (Article III), conducting participant observations was another strategy to recruit interviewees for thematic interviews. Because the gatekeepers played a role in structuring my interactions in these settings, and owing to the time frame of the language and CV courses, with short breaks between the classes, I asked the people I encountered to meet me for an interview later. I conducted 54 semi-structured thematic interviews with young Russian-speakers in the Helsinki capital region (20 male and 34 female participants). All but one had been born outside Finland, and all interviews were with individuals, apart from three pair interviews. My interviewees were between 22 and 32 years old and came from Russia, Estonia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Armenia. The vast majority were from Russia and Estonia, which are the two largest migrant groups in Finland. Most of the research participants from Russia came from the north-west of the country and belonged to Russia's white majority background. Research participants from Estonia often identified themselves as ethnic Russians, and some did not define their background in clear-cut terms owing to their parents' mixed heritage and places of birth. While some moved to Finland with their parents when they were children, the majority of my interviewees migrated alone. Although often symbolically distancing from manual labour and valuing themselves as university-educated people, these young people received little financial support from their parents when moving to and living in Finland. In addition, Euro to Russian Ruble exchange rate rapidly dropped in 2014 with Ruble losing its value almost in half, which made financial support from their parents living in home countries even more difficult.

As many participants were recruited through the integration and welfare offices, access to which required regular residence in Finland, my interviewees had regular migrant status in Finland. Many were naturalised Finnish citizens. However, the difficulty of obtaining a residence permit and regularising the status in Finland was a topic discussed extensively by my research participants, which shows how deportability (De Genova, 2002) and irregularity are conditions that also structure the lives of regular migrants (article

II). I also encountered people who were staying (and over-staying) in Finland with a tourist visa, but I did not manage to keep in touch with them.

The interviews were semi-structured and thematic, which meant that I had key topics that needed to be covered during each interview. Although I had a list of topics and questions that I wanted to discuss with my interviewees, I did not have the list with me during the interviews in order to create a less formal interview environment. Establishing confidential relationships was crucial during the interviews. I would usually start the interview with a short story about myself, followed by questions from the interviewees to me. The fact that my research participants identified me in similar terms to a Russian person living in Finland provoked interest in me as a person with a similar background, rather than as a researcher studying migration. I was frequently asked which city I came from, where I had studied, how I had moved to Helsinki, what I was doing in Finland, whether my parents lived in Russia, how often I visited home and what my plans were after the PhD. While interviewing, I aimed for the conversation to flow freely, while gently guiding the interviewee toward key themes. The interview themes included life before and after migration, migration history and status, experiences with the integration courses, the employment office and welfare institutions, experiences of searching for jobs, working conditions, family, friendships and transnational practices. Although these themes guided the interviews, my aim was to let my participants speak about issues that interested and concerned them most. I listened to some interviewees for about an hour without interruption. Most importantly, I wanted to understand people's conceptions of themselves and how they wanted to be seen by others. This sometimes led to challenging ethical situations (see Section 4.9).

When recruiting my research participants, I purposefully did not include Russian-speaking workers in information technology (IT) or academia, although I did encounter them during my fieldwork. I considered their stories an exception to the general rule, as their cultural capital is relatively easily internationally transferable. It was my theoretical and political choice to problematise the notions of 'high skills' beyond the relatively privileged migration of those who are often the (male) 'winners' in globalisation (Kofman, 2013).

All the interviews were conducted in Russian, which was the native language or one of the native languages of all interviewees. The fact that the interviews were conducted in the native or one of the native languages[13] of my participants is a strength of my data, as many people had recently moved to Finland and did not yet speak Finnish fluently, while a few others felt uncomfortable speaking English.

[13] Russian was the first language for the people coming from Russia and ethnic Russians from Estonia. Research participants would often identify themselves and others as Russian-speaking rather than Russian. Research participants from Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Moldova had Russian as one of their native languages or the language that they studied at school. However, due to a small number of people coming from these countries in my interview and ethnographic data, this language issue did not affect the quality of data, analysis and findings.

The native language provided access to the young migrants' stories, with different migration histories, educational backgrounds and language skills.

I conducted the interviews in cafés, my participants' homes and sometimes on university premises. Interviews conducted at my participants' homes normally lasted longer, as by the end the conversations would be flowing. When conducting interviews in cafés, I tried to choose popular places in the centre of the city. It was also important not to carry out interviews in places that were too small or quiet, as this would have made it uncomfortable for the participants to share personal stories at the risk of being overheard, albeit in a foreign language. When doing pair interviews, I noticed that my interviewees made remarks to each other about not speaking too loudly. I interpreted this not only as relating to public order and the norm of speaking rather quietly in Finland, but also as a way of not becoming too visible in public spaces through 'audible visibility' (Toivanen, 2014; Leinonen, 2012). These observations of speaking Russian in public spaces were later supported by the interviewees, who talked, for example, about avoiding answering the phone in Russian on public transport.

The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 2.5 hours. I used a recorder unless my participants did not wish to be recorded. All but two consented to being recorded. I then transcribed the interviews myself at word-level accuracy. I kept in touch with some of the research participants after I had finished my fieldwork.

4.7 Translation and analysis

This research involved moving across three languages: English, Finnish and Russian. The interviews were conducted in Russian, sometimes mixed with Finnish terms referring to the names of certain professions, such as *lähihoitaja* (practical nurse)*, henkilökohtainen avustaja* (personal consultant) and *lastenhoitaja* (daycare worker), and bureaucratic terms such as *TE-toimisto* (employment office)*, työkokeilu* (work trial)*, palkkatuki* (sibsidised wage)*, oleskelulupa* (residence permit) and *pysyvä* (permanent residence permit). The fact that this vocabulary was often unfamiliar to me and I had to ask for translations suggests how my research participants had to deal with the complicated bureaucratic systems that regulated their lives. I observed situations taking place in Finnish or Russian. I made fieldnotes in Russian or English, sometimes referring to certain terms in Finnish.

The fact that Finnish is not my native language created points of connection with my research participants. During the fieldwork, I started to attend Finnish courses myself, and the boundaries between fieldwork and personal life became blurred. I met many new people on these Finnish language courses, which helped me acquire a deeper understanding of other people living in Helsinki. The fact that I was learning Finnish and attending public courses while doing my research created many common points of interest and topics for discussion with my research participants, and placed me in the position of a learner

rather than a knower (see Smith, 1987). Also, the fact that some of my research participants spoke much better Finnish than me disrupted some of the power relations between us.

As others have argued, data collection and analysis are not strictly distinct phases in ethnographic research (Gobo, 2008: 226). Fieldnotes are already products of active processes of interpretation and selection (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). In fact, the researcher always makes choices while carrying out observations and making fieldnotes. For example, my interest in some of the themes emerged as I tried to access the field and noticed how my research participants positioned me in categories such as 'non-Russian-looking' (Article I) or 'intelligentsia'. Thus, my active presence in the field provided a source of learning about categories that were important to them. My theoretical interest in the concept of whiteness (Article IV) emerged while conducting interviews and observations when my research participants referred to other non-white people, although this concept did not inform my research from the start. Similarly, the theme of borders and immigration controls (Article II) became salient in my day-to-day meetings with my research participants, when they discussed strategies for renewing residence permits.

In the analysis, I started to code all the interviews and fieldnotes, aiming to identify themes and patterns and organising the data thematically (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). The analysis proceeded as an inductive process guided by theoretical concepts. I did not use any software to code and organise my data, as I did not find it helpful. Instead, I read the interview transcriptions and fieldnotes, highlighting themes, and copying and pasting them into a separate file to make theoretical memos. As I identified key themes, my aim was to put my data in dialogue with the theoretical concepts. The theories and concepts I used were based on their explanatory power to help me understand the data.

While reading through and coding the interviews, I noticed a recurrent theme of 'the West' and the phrase 'I have always dreamed of living in the West', which my research participants repeated in the interviews. I conducted further analysis in dialogue with my fieldnotes and the literature on imagination and coloniality (Article I). Coding my fieldnotes from participant observations in the career counselling office made me look further into how 'migrant worker' subjects were produced by different gendered racialising logics through the counsellors' references to 'nice girls' and 'lazy migrant men' (Article III).

4.8 Ethical questions

Although my project is grounded on a critique of the binaries of object/subject, insider/outsider, as a researcher I take full responsibility for interpreting and representing the stories of the people who trusted me sufficiently to share them. The researcher holds a special position of power to decide what to communicate and what to omit (Taylor, 2011), and friendly relationships do not take away the researcher's control over writing and creating stories about people (Bhavnani, 1993).

Ethics informs the whole research process, from negotiating access and establishing relationships with research participants, to interpretation and representation (Skeggs, 2001: 434). I followed formal guidelines on ethics, such as ensuring informed consent, maintaining my research participants' anonymity and avoiding causing them harm. I have used pseudonyms and have omitted references to personal details.

I understand ethical research also from the perspective of micro-ethics, such as being attentive to my participants' feelings and comfort zones at each stage of the research (Doucet & Mauthner, 2002). I proposed turning off the recorder if I saw that my interviewees felt uncomfortable about discussing certain issues with the recorder on. I also told them that they did not have to answer questions that they felt uncomfortable about, such as their migration status or how they had obtained their residence permits. I transcribed all the interviews myself. While conducting the observations and short ethnographic interviews, I did not rush to ask about my participants' backgrounds and the jobs they were doing in Helsinki, although I could have collected 'data' about people more quickly. For many, this was a sensitive issue, and immediately being asked questions about work might have defined their value only as (non-)workers.

Representation was a key ethical concern in this research. I sometimes found myself in uneasy situations when my research participants shared feelings of frustration, disappointment, tiredness and inability to foresee their futures. At the same time, I saw this frustration being expressed through racist statements in relation to other migrants, whom they sometimes saw as free-riders in Finland (Article IV). Being ethical in such situations meant remaining committed to understanding people's conceptions of themselves, and not representing them in ways that would reproduce negative stereotypes. Research is a representational space, and the text is the final product of ethnography, through which researchers enable representations of people (Skeggs, 2001: 433). Although I understand racism as a structural issue (Lentin, 2004; Bonilla-Silva, 2013), rather than as a deviance or as the prejudicial attitudes of certain groups, there was a danger of portraying my research participants as lagging behind 'progressive Western values of multiculturalism', thus justifying the racism they were experiencing themselves. The ethical question was how to analyse and present these discourses without reproducing stereotypes of 'Russians' and 'East Europeans' being 'more racist' than others or lacking education. Yet I did not wish to excuse racism, nor portray my research participants as crude racists. Feminist research cannot be complicit with dominant representations that reinscribe structural inequalities (Bhavnani, 1993), and my key ethical challenge was to ask what kinds of representations of people my research would feed into.

4.9 Uncomfortable interviews on the edge of whiteness

In situations when my research participants made racialising or racist references to other people, I decided to 'talk back' (Ahmed, 2017; hooks, 1989), questioning their ideas about other people in a calm and

dialogical manner, as I felt uncomfortable reproducing those views through silence. In fact, this sometimes had the effect of disrupting the normalised flow of racist ideas and making us pause and think together (see Ahmed, 2017). I did my fieldwork during the period of summer and autumn 2015 when Finland received over 30,000 refugees, and migration was one of the key topics in public discussion. Once I started to closely analyse instances in which racist and racialising statements were pronounced in my interview and ethnographic data, I realised that it was a *modality* (Hall, 1996) through which they resisted being identified as 'welfare scroungers', 'migrant', 'low-skilled worker' or 'unemployed' figures (Article IV).

The fact that some of my participants referred to racialised others as 'blacks' or 'refugees' – terms used interchangeably – suggests that they perceived themselves and me in the research situation as white. These terms were used so unproblematically, and without caution about my own views, that the interview situation became enacted as a 'white space', or what has been termed as the 'white space of privilege' (Lundström, 2010) that accommodates racist categorisations. In such instances, our whiteness – which would not necessarily have been recognised in other situations – was shared and mutually recognised. Unlike other research and interview situations where whiteness was dominant and invisible (Lundström, 2010), I felt that amid the participants' narratives of the difficulties of establishing a life in Finland, their references to non-white others appeared to be an unanticipated crafting of precarious white privilege on the 'edge' of whiteness. Seeing and recognising me as one of 'us' – 'whites' – created space for such statements. The challenging feelings of discomfort and embarrassment while conducting the interviews and observations made me think more closely about why it was so important to my research participants to distance themselves from non-white others and invest in their whiteness. This framed one of the key contributions of this research.

5. Summary of Findings

This section presents the original publications, Articles I to IV. The articles take different perspectives on the issues of young Russian-speakers' lives, racialisation and labour following migration. They are presented not in chronological order but in a logical order to create an ethnographic narrative out of the findings.

5.1 Article I: Imagining the 'West' in the context of global coloniality – The case of post-Soviet youth migration to Finland

Article I is co-authored with Lena Näre. The article contributes to theorisation of postsocialist imaginaries in the context of coloniality and sociological imagination. It asks what kinds of perceptions of themselves young Russian-speakers bring with them through migration, how they see their position in the global capitalist modernity, and what they are seeking to achieve through migration to Finland. The analysis connects the literature on imagination in migration (Benson, 2012; Koikkalainen & Kyle, 2016) with discussion of global coloniality (Quijano, 2000). The article argues that young Russian-speakers attempt to distinguish themselves from the non-modern or less modern spaces of their home countries, and to realise their potential as 'modern' global subjects with international cultural capital through migration to Finland imagined as 'the West'.

Following existing research, which has shown that imagination is a driving force of migration (Benson, 2012; Koikkalainen & Kyle, 2016) and is a collective rather than individual act (Appadurai, 1990), we show that young Russian speakers act on their imagination of 'the West' and the promise of what they will be able to achieve by migrating to Finland. To analyse these imaginaries in migration, we draw on the framework of coloniality as a 'model of power relations that came into existence as a consequence of the Western imperial expansion but did not end with the official end of colonialism' (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012: 7). The starting point for this critique is that although political colonialism has been formally eliminated, the structures classifying people according to the global matrix of power mark today's ex-third world, ex-socialist and Western subjects alike (Tlostanova, 2012: 133; see also Hall, 1996). This critique in sociological theory has arguably centred on the North and South, producing theories and epistemologies of the South (Connell, 2007; Santos, 2014). Young Russian-speakers' imaginaries from their position to the East of 'the West' (Boatcă, 2007; Mayblin et al., 2016) or the 'poor of the North' (Tlostanova, 2012) offer a contribution to theorisation on global coloniality, and recognition that postcolonial effects have consequences beyond the immediate presence of a colonial power (Bhambra, 2014b: 22).

Drawing on the framework of coloniality, we show that rather than structuring their imagination through images of Finland and their home countries as bounded units of nation states, young Russian-speakers narrate their migration through the discourse of difference between 'the West' as global and modern, and

their home countries as non-modern and belonging to failed socialist modernity. Despite its rather peripheral status in the modern world imaginary, far from the core colonial empires taken as a starting point in post-/de-colonial theories, it is precisely Finland's belonging to the symbolic geographies of Europeanness and Westernness that attract young Russian-speakers to move to Finland. Although the relationship between Finland and Russia is characterised by the history of Russia's imperial domination, today's positioning of Finland as 'Europe' and 'the West' elevates it in the global racialised hierarchy in the imaginaries of young Russian-speaking people migrating to Finland. They identify themselves with 'the West' through their social class, cultural capital, generational experiences and perceptions of themselves as global subjects who happen to have been born in the supposedly 'wrong', non-modern space of postsocialism. We argue that young Russian-speakers' migration to Finland can be understood as an effort to gain social distinction (Bourdieu, 1979) vis-à-vis non-modern or less modern post-Soviet life, and as an attempt to pursue a 'different' life imagined as part of 'the West'. It matters less what Finland as a country can offer to young Russian-speakers, so much as the meanings of Finland as part of 'the West' and 'Europe'.

Central to these depictions is the narration of space as time (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2000). While narrating their home countries through symbols of (post-)Soviet lifestyle, they project to a temporality in which their home countries are represented through images of the past. The 'West' is imagined through the aesthetics of a supposedly 'modern space', epitomised in symbols of modernity, order and cleanliness. The lives they imagined after migration and those had they not migrated are based on spatialised hierarchies of civilisation that divide the world into 'the West and the rest' – modern, less modern and non-modern spaces (see also Baker, 2018). The way of life that they imagine in Finland is opposed to boring weekends in dachas cultivating vegetables with their parents, living in old *khruschevka* apartments, and a space where people still supposedly buy goods from behind the counter (*za prilavkom)*, do not speak foreign languages and are not 'cosmopolitan'. These are images of life that do not foresee the future which has supposedly already been achieved in the 'West', and where they might finally emancipate themselves as global subjects. Young Russian-speakers in Helsinki refer to powerful symbols of the past to diagnose the present that they would supposedly have been inhabiting in their home countries had they not migrated. They order the world according to a chronological narrative and are engaged in a process of distinguishing and classifying themselves according to the imaginary of the world with 'the West' at its core. The article discusses self-orientalising narratives and the young people's struggles to disassociate themselves from the racialised subject position of 'Russianness'.

The article concludes by arguing that young Russian-speakers' imaginaries of 'the West' and its promise highlight the position of postsocialist subjects in relation to global coloniality and self-orientalisation. Our analysis suggests that re-thinking modernity (Bhambra, 2007a) and engaging with the 'global futures' of

sociology (Bhambra & Santos, 2017) should include not only North and South subject positions, but should also analyse the effects of coloniality beyond the immediate presence of a colonial power.

If young Russian-speakers aim to become cosmopolitan and global subjects through migration to Finland imagined as 'the West', what are the processes through which they become conceptualised as 'migrants' – that is, positioned within Finland's racialised class structures as de-skilled and lower-skilled workers or unemployed? Articles II and III analyse how young Russian-speakers become positioned as racialised and gendered 'migrant' subjects, rather than 'Westerners' or 'Europeans', as well as their own ideas of who can belong to 'the West' (Article IV).

5.2 Article II: (Im)mobile lives – Young Russian women's work and citizenship insecurities in Finland

Article II discusses how a 'migrant' figure is produced as a legal category and is tied to the political economy of labour. Regardless of geographical proximity and the relative ease with which Russians are able to cross territorial borders to Finland as tourists, the young people talked extensively about their struggles to regularise their migrant status even after several years of living in Finland. Young Russians' residence in Finland as non-EU citizens carries specific and enforceable controls tied to a bureaucratic system of residence permits. The article examines how immigration controls structure young Russian women's movement to Finland, channelling them along a precarious path from au pairing to studying and working in low-skilled sectors, and producing highly exploitative employment relations.

There has been extensive discussion in the migration literature of irregular migrants' precarity and insecurity (De Genova, 2002), yet deportability and irregularity also structure the lives of migrants with regular status. Drawing on critical border studies (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; De Genova, 2002) and the literature on gendered migrations (Kofman et al., 2000; Kofman, 2013; Tkach, 2014; Näre, 2014), I discuss how young Russian women cope with immigration controls, the production of gendered migrant subjects and structural vulnerabilities created by the border regime. There is ongoing debate in critical migration studies on the capitalist economy's dependence on the availability of migrant labour and how migrant labour is produced through criminalisation, detention and stigmatisation (De Genova, 2002; De Giorgi, 2010; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Anderson, 2010, 2013; Ahmad, 2008; Bales & Mayblin, 2018). While there has been a continuous process of de-bordering commodities, re-bordering has been taking place in relation to certain groups of migrants as part of a punitive turn in the regulation of migration (De Giorgi, 2010). These developments in the criminalisation of migration have been analysed against the backdrop of an increasingly precarious and deregulated neoliberal economy in need of a docile and laborious workforce (De Giorgi, 2010). Thus, rather than being a technology of exclusion, borders may be better conceptualised as a process of differential inclusion, in which subjects become labour and part

of the social through subordination and discrimination (Mezzdra & Neilson, 2013: 159). Bridget Anderson (2010, 2013) has also argued that immigration controls and territorial borders do not just control migration flows, but also produce labour, employment relations and status. Immigration enforcement weakens migrant workers' power to bargain with employers, and produces institutionalised uncertainty and conditions for exploitation (Wills et al., 2010: 26). I set this critique in dialogue with feminist theories of migration, which have argued that labour migration programmes and policies have different impacts on gendered subjects of labour (Kofman, 2013; Donato et al., 2006; Levitt, DeWind & Vertovec, 2003; Nagar et al., 2002). This discussion reveals the gendered construction of skills and the unequal valorisation of gendered skills in migration (Kofman, 2013; see also Ruhs & Anderson 2010: 19). The border regime therefore produces gendered and racialised migrant worker subjects, and the ability to cross borders is structured according to class, nationality, religion, race and gender (Yuval-Davis, Anthias & Kofman, 2005).

This article discusses the *au pair–student–worker* path as young Russian migrant women's way of coping with immigration controls and as a strategy to regularise their stay in Finland. Many Russian women interviewed for this project had used an au pair visa to move to Finland after finishing university, instrumentalising it as an avenue for subsequent migration as they intended to stay in the country. Although officially referred to as 'cultural exchange', au pairing has been transformed into a path to economic, predominantly female migration from postsocialist states to Western Europe, while also fulfilling the demand for care work (Tkach, 2014). An au pair residence permit appears to be a lucrative option for moving to Finland, since it has lower entry requirements than other channels that require employment contracts or bank statements. To be eligible for an au pair visa, the applicant must be between 17 and 30 years old and have a host family in Finland. Au pair agencies are advertised on the billboards of the universities where my research participants had studied.

While an au pair visa seemed like to be an easy channel and the first step on the way to 'the West' via Helsinki, au pairing as a form of migrant labour also meets a growing demand for private care work in Finland (Näre, 2013a). Young migrant women talked about their duties at home as being full-time work, with a high dependence for residence in Finland on the families 'hosting' them. The young Russian-speaking women work overtime and stay alone with the children for weeks while the parents are on holiday. While often carrying out full-time domestic and care work, sometimes with no days off, they receive pocket money of only EUR 200 to 400 a month. Dependence on the host family for regularisation of their migrant status works as a mechanism to govern female migrants, which creates highly unequal power relations between au pairs and families, and ties them to domestic and care work in host households.

Once a one-year au pair visa has expired, young female Russian migrants strategically move to the next migrant status and obtain a student visa to regularise their stay in Finland. Until 2017, university education was tuition-fee free for non-EU citizens, which enabled Russian-speaking women to move from au pair to student status. A student visa is the second easiest way to obtain a residence permit. However, it requires either a bank statement proving EUR 6,720 in a bank account and expensive private health insurance, or an employment contract not exceeding 25 hours a week. The requirement to regularise their status as foreign students channels them to the most available kinds of work, often in cleaning companies or restaurants. Their dependence on employment contracts for regularisation of their migrant status makes migrant workers vulnerable to abusive employment relations such as overtime work, unsocial working hours, hyperflexibility and harassment (see also Maury, 2017). After graduation, young Russian women must secure new employment contracts in order to obtain the next residence permit. Thus, immigration controls are best thought as a mechanism that produces migrant employment paths and relations (Anderson, 2010, 2013).

The article shows that, despite having higher education and professional work experience in their home countries, young Russian women's ability to move in social space – that is, search for better jobs and careers and switch work sectors – may be undercut by the border regime, migrant status insecurity and unequal access to geographical mobility. Immigration controls thus reproduce the sexually and racially segmented labour force (Lowe, 1997: 22). These findings further question the overreliance of migration research on reproducing bureaucratic categories created by the immigration industry. A particular administrative 'category' of migrants (e.g. family reunification, labour migrants or student migrants) often forms a starting point for migration research. How young female migrants instrumentalise immigration controls and interact with the gendered, classed and racialised border regime reveals a gap between their dreams of certain lifestyles (*living in the West*) and their legal positioning in the bureaucratic system as non-EU citizens, which ties them to the border and labour regime. Their insecure migrant status channels them to work that does not match their qualifications and produces hyper-exploitative employment relations.

This shows internal diversity in a category of 'Russian-speaking migrants' and legal hierarchies in the single largest migrant and racialised group in Finland. However, I further reveal that, having obtained a permanent residence permit and formal citizenship rights, borders do not cease to exist, but become re-inscribed through bureaucratic encounters, unemployment and workfare. In Article III, I discuss how 'migrants' are produced as both a legal and social category through gendered racialisation in workfare.

5.3 Article III: The making of gendered 'migrant worker' subjects in youth activation – The case of young Russian-speakers in Finland

Control over mobility is central to the capitalist economy, tying workers to their employers through the border regime (Article II). However, even when formal residence and citizenship rights are achieved, migrants and racialised minority populations remain in precarious labour market positions and experience unemployment disproportionately (Statistics Finland, 2013; OECD, 2017). Article III draws on participant observation data collected in youth career counselling services. Drawing on ethnography in youth career counselling in 2014-2015, I analyse day-to-day, racialising and gendering institutional encounters between unemployed Russian-speakers and youth activation. Unlike the young people experiencing insecure migrant status and uncertainty over visa renewals in Article II, this article draws on participant observations of welfare encounters between career counsellors and young people who have permanent residence or are naturalised Finnish citizens, and enjoy the same welfare rights as Finnish citizens. The article contributes to discussion of migrant labour by addressing it in the context of the current transition from welfare to workfare states and the de-universalisation of citizenship rights (Wacquant, 2009; Adkins, 2015; Haikkola, 2018). Despite extensive evidence of migrant and racialised populations' lower employment rates (OECD, 2017), empirically grounded research on the workings of workfare in relation to migrant and racialised groups in Europe is scarce (but see Scrinzi, 2011; Nordberg, 2015).

The aim of this article is two-fold. First, it argues that migrant labour can be produced not only by excluding migrants from citizenship and legal rights (De Genova, 2002; De Giorgi, 2010), as I argue in Article II, but also through the targeted inclusion of unemployed migrants and racialised minority populations in precarious labour markets as contingent labour through workfare schemes. Second, the article shows that the production of migrant labour through day-to-day institutional encounters with the welfare/workfare state is a deeply gendered process, with different gendered logics in relation to racialised male and female workers.

The analysis is framed in the context of activating labour market policies in Finland which target young people. The aim of these activation schemes is to assist young people in acquiring so-called 'working life skills' and securing a study programme or job within three months of registering as unemployed, through regular meetings with career counsellors and participation in various courses. Through labour activation or workfare, which Finland has been actively implementing, unemployment benefits are no longer framed in the context of rights, but become conditional on participation in mandatory work trials, courses and job counselling meetings (Haikkola, 2018; Adkins, 2015). Activation creates opportunities for business enterprises through contractual relations with private companies as sites for work placements (Tyler, 2013). Like other migrant and racialised minority groups, Russian-speakers in Finland experience

unemployment disproportionately (Statistics Finland, 2013; Kobak, 2013), which subjects them to activation measures.

The core of labour activation is an institutional logic of distinguishing between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' unemployed – that is, determining which members of the population are required to earn a living or get training to become more 'employable' (Peck, 2001). In Finland, labour activation classifies the unemployed into three categories depending on assessments of their 'employability'. After registering a young person (under 30 years old) as unemployed, the Public Employment Office categorises them according to service lines with different 'service needs' that represent various degrees of 'employability'. The first service line, 'Employment and Business Services' is designed for those considered most job-ready, most employable and who do not require intense activation measures. The second line, 'Competence Development Services' is for those who are considered to be 'lacking skill' and requiring skills enhancement and competence development, including the youth career counselling where the fieldwork for this study was carried out. The third service line, 'Supported Employment Services' is for unemployed people with disabling issues, deemed in need of intensive support and rehabilitation. Workfare and conditionality of benefits signal not only corrosion of the universalistic principles of the Finnish welfare state, but also the racialising effects of such qualifications. Racialised minority youth, those with a migrant background and those with no or vocational training are likely to be channelled to the 'Competence Development' or 'Supported Employment Services' lines. Young people may lose their unemployment benefits if they fail to comply with the requirements of activation.

The analysis is structured around the gendered logic of racialisation of young Russian-speakers' skills in labour activation. The empirical part begins by analysing the production of 'migrant femininities', followed by analysis of 'migrant masculinities'. I argue that racialisation and production of 'migrant worker' subjects is a gendered process, with different gendered logics distinguishing between the kinds of skills that female and male racialised workers are supposed to possess 'naturally'. Day-to-day institutional encounters aim to produce caring 'migrant femininities' and construct young Russian-speaking women as unproblematic, willing and 'nice' workers. Activation channels them to sexually differentiated labour, such as care and service work, requiring skills that young women are deemed to possess simply by virtue of being identified as women. This is in sharp contrast to how young migrant and racialised masculinities are governed and produced through daily encounters in welfare offices. Young unemployed migrant and racialised men are seen through the prism of disobedience and laziness, which must be brought under control through labour activation. Young Russian-speaking men are funnelled into work and unpaid work placements in construction, warehousing and logistics. Even though the rhetoric of gender equality as a cornerstone of Finnish nation building is often used to exclude racialised and migrant Others for not fitting the supposedly gender-equal nation (Tuori, 2007; Keskinen,

2019), labour activation exacerbates the segregation of racialised minority youth into gendered and racialised employment paths. The construction of these employment paths shows, recalling Fanon (1969), that racialisaton is a process that violently constructs certain bodies and simultaneously puts gender at the core of classification systems.

The analysis demonstrates how young unemployed Russian-speakers are made into gendered 'migrant worker' subjects by negating their individual skills and qualifications, and channelling them into lower-skilled, migrant-dominated work sectors such as care work, logistics, warehouse work and construction. Young people are directed not toward sectors for which they have appropriate skills and educational qualifications, but toward those with labour shortages. Despite having formal citizenship and residence rights, with access to welfare services, young Russian-speakers are maintained in a 'migrant worker' subject position, not through their migrant status but by virtue of being channelled into lower-skilled jobs and unpaid work placements through workfare structures. These encounters demonstrate how certain populations are fixed in a racialised and gendered 'migrant' position through labour, even though many are already or will soon become Finnish citizens.

5.4 Article IV: Claims to whiteness – Young unemployed Russian-speakers' declassificatory struggles in Finland

The ways young Russian-speakers often narrate their post-migratory lives through the feelings of frustration is a result of their downward social mobility and being classified, gendered and racialised as de-skilled labour, as analysed in Articles II and III. Although, for many, their economic positions improve, young people find themselves in a situation where their cultural capital is devalued and unrecognised. Many find themselves caught in a precarious circle of unemployment and work trials imposed by labour activation schemes. Young Russian-speakers live and narrate racialisation through experiences of social downgrading as workers, unemployment and de-skilled labour. Their emotional responses are a result of being placed in the racialising classificatory system (Tyler, 2013) of Finnish society, which assigns them a position that they did not expect when imagining their post-migratory lives as 'aspiring Westerners' (Article I).

In Article IV, I examine the production of whiteness vis-à-vis non-white Others by unemployed and precariously employed Russian-speakers, against the backdrop of the neoliberal reshaping of class relations in Finland. I analyse the position of young Russian-speakers as both being racialised and racialising Others. Their position in Finland's racialised class structure and their labour market precarity generate strong emotional responses that demonstrate that their labour market positions are crucial to their perceptions of self-worth after migration. These positions produce powerful social emotions of shame and judgment (Skeggs, 1997) when revealing their unemployment or occupations to others. Race

is the *modality* in which class is 'lived' in their lives (Hall, 1980). These processes should be seen against the backdrop of political rhetoric on the dismantling of the welfare state and discourses around 'passive' welfare claimants, which have been strongly directed against migrant and racialised minority groups (Keskinen, 2016). Although class and race have long been silenced in Finnish debates as part of the discourse of an egalitarian nation (Vuorela, 2009; Kolehmainen, 2017), the boundaries of respectable citizenship have become increasingly constructed around the values of employment and hard work, targeted particularly against migrants and racialised populations (Mäkinen, 2014). I argue that their production of whiteness vis-à-vis non-white Others should be analysed against this backdrop of increasing pressure to disassociate from the 'undeserving' and stigmatised 'migrant' category. The analysis takes an ethical and political approach to analysing how the research participants make value and defend themselves against their own racial stigma through assertions of whiteness.

The article draws on and extends the literature on critical whiteness studies and contributes to analysis of the racialisation of whiteness in migration (Fox, 2013; Fox, Moroşanu & Szilassy, 2012; Benson, 2011; Lundström, 2014). Critical whiteness scholars have argued that whiteness is not just a matter of skin colour, but a structural position of advantage and privilege (Frankenberg, 1993) from which young Russian-speakers are excluded through their racialised, not-fully-white position. Majority Russians' privileged position as white in Russia's racialised hierarchies is challenged following migration to Finland, which also positions them as unemployed or low-skilled workers in an austere and welfare-chauvinistic context. Whiteness may be undercut by factors such as history, class, clothing, citizenship, gender and accent, and is better thought of as a contingent social hierarchy rather than a white/non-white binary (Garner, 2006). Thus, while their embodied white capital may sometimes allow them to pass as white Finns in Finland (see also Lapiņa, 2018 on a Latvian passing in Denmark), Russian-speakers do not occupy a structural position of privilege, and their ostensible whiteness does not translate into social mobility in Finland following migration.

I begin my analysis by examining how young migrants narrate their racialised position as de-skilled workers and unemployed, and then look at how they aim to re-inscribe themselves into whiteness by racialising non-white Others. Although intra-migrant forms of racialisation remain an undertheorised topic, previous work has started to analyse these processes, mainly in the context of migration from EU accession states (Fox, 2013; Fox, Moroşanu & Szilassy, 2012). Such research has argued that Hungarian and Romanian workers in the UK racialise ethnic minorities and the Roma in order to defend the relatively privileged position that their 'putative whiteness affords them in the UK's segmented labour market' (Fox, 2013: 1871). For example, Fox (2013) has argued that, 'using racism' and their 'putative whiteness', Hungarians and Romanians assign other minorities the status of 'less white' in Britain's racialised hierarchies, and hence their 'use of racism' makes them white. Gudbjort Guðjónsdóttir (2014)

has also demonstrated that Icelandic migrants in Norway use their nationality and whiteness to darken more visible groups and place themselves within the invisibly white hegemonic majority. The main narrative of this work recalls assimilative narratives of ways in which 'off-whites' gradually become white by racialising less white and non-white Others. I argue that that 'off-white' migrants do not become white through racialising other non-white people since structural racism does not cease to exist. In addition, this argument may dangerously undermine the concept of race and whiteness as socially constructed, and instead reify whiteness as a factual and ontological racial category.

I show that taking for granted the phenotypical whiteness of ostensibly white migrants closes down opportunities to ask how whiteness can be regarded as a space of struggle and can be analysed as a process of generating alternative value as respectable workers and 'deserving poor' in the context of neoliberal capitalism, workfare and racialisation of migration. I draw on literature that has explored connections between whiteness and worker identity (Virdee, 2014), and argue that recent theorisation of class as a *struggle against the effects of classification* (Tyler, 2013, 2015: 507) is a useful analytical framework to analyse the effects of being both racialised and classed as low-skilled workers or unemployed following migration. I argue that Russian-speakers' racialisation of non-white Others should be regarded as an attempt to dis-identify themselves from the stigmatised position of welfare claimant, de-skilled worker or unemployed migrant. How young Russian-speakers attempt to re-inscribe themselves into whiteness should be understood as a *struggle against classification*, through which they resist imposed categorisations and carve out spaces for respectability and worth. Their racialised class experiences are rearticulated through the 'racist ideological syntax' (Hall, 1980: 341) against those positioned even lower in the racialised ladder.

The article concludes that neoliberal capitalist ideologies, in which one's worth and belonging can be achieved (delusively) only through hard work and not being identified as 'white trash' on welfare, go hand in hand with the old divide-and-rule logic. As a result, common interests in social justice are compromised by claiming deservingness at the cost of others – in fact, positioned within the same racialising classificatory system in similarly disadvantaged terms.

6. Conclusions: Living under the Conditions of the Global 'Posts'

This research is about young Russian-speaking people's quest for emancipation as Western subjects through migration to Helsinki, their struggles to dis-identify from non-modern spaces and non-white Others, and their attempts to re-inscribe themselves into respectability, whiteness and the global 'West'. These young people share the generational experience of having been born and raised following the collapse of the socialist system, thus inhabiting the global *posts* – the postsocialist and postcolonial world order, with its dominant Europeanness and whiteness and the end of the 'second world narrative' (Tlostanova, 2012). The young Russian-speakers whom I met during this research imagined themselves living with no future in the space of failed socialist modernity had they not migrated to 'the West'. These are young subjects who occupy a void and are often neglected in the academic literature. They are not fully white, yet are not the radical opposite to 'the West'; they are expected to be on a path to Europeanisation, and yet are not achieving this. Their postsocialist*ness* is expected to vanish into history, giving way to the inevitable neoliberal capitalist modernity. However, as writer, Svetlana Alexievich (2017: 122) has put it, '[while] they say socialism is over, we are still here'.

Despite differing historical trajectories, the 'postsocialist' condition (Fraser, 1997) refers not only to the collapse of the socialist system in countries that were under state socialism, but also to ongoing dismantling of the welfare state in Nordic countries such as Finland, which have long been referred to as a model of universalism and redistribution of wealth. While I do not aim to romanticise the 'good old' welfare state – to which many of my research participants had no access despite contributing to it – it is welfare itself that has now become a site for labour exploitation through mandatory work-related activities and training that integrate the 'undeserving' poor with formal citizenship rights into the labour market. Young Russian-speakers' imaginaries and experiences of migration point to finely-graded, spatialised hierarchies of the modern world, where becoming global and modern is perceived to be possible only through migration to the global 'West', yet this position in 'the West' becomes available through emplacement within racialised, gendered and classed structures of precarious labour.

To theorise this condition, I have departed from analytical separation of the world into spaces marked by either postcolonialism or postsocialism (Chari & Verdery, 2009; Baker, 2018), which has been instrumental in organising the division of academic labour and disciplinary boundaries in social sciences. I have used the notion of connected sociologies (Bhambra, 2014) to bring young post-Soviet migrants into discussion of global coloniality, whiteness and 'Westernness'. I have discussed previous research that has revealed the intertwined relations of the spatially positioned world, with race and coloniality being foundational to modernity and capitalism (Du Bois, 1920; Mignolo, 2000; Robinson, 1983). Neither the postsocialist world nor Nordic countries are exceptions to the postcolonial condition and the desire to

belong to the Western project and hegemonic whiteness. Against this backdrop, I have analysed young Russian-speakers' migration to Helsinki as a quest for Europeanness and a form of distinction from non-modern spaces lacking a future, which are presumed to have already been achieved in 'the West'. What matters to young Russian-speakers is not so much what they want to do in Helsinki, but *where they imagine themselves being*, and what promises 'the West' holds for them by transforming them into modern subjects.

This story unfolded in the context of Finland – the border between West and non-West, the edge of whiteness, located in a precarious position in relation to the East/West divide. Despite its peripheralised status and recent membership of 'the West', it is precisely because Finland, and particularly Helsinki, belong to the symbolic geographies of 'Westernness' and 'Europeanness' that they matter to my research participants. This is thus not a context of 'core' empires taken as an initial theoretical point for analysing whiteness, but a space that is often considered to be a bystander to the unfolding of coloniality itself, positioned on the easternmost margin of Western Europe. This is a new context in which to analyse the production and racialisation of whiteness beyond the context of global metropoles, which nevertheless points to the very mode of connection to global structures of race and whiteness in the geopolitical context that tends to escape post-/de-colonial critique. Finland's inscription into the structures of *Europeanness* has elevated its position in global hierarchies, offering a chance for Russian-speakers to become fully modern subjects through migration.

Global and postcolonial sociology, which has called for deconstruction of the Eurocentric epistemic North (Bhambra & Santos, 2017; Boatcă & Costa, 2010), should thus consider not only relations between former colonies and global metropoles, but the production of coloniality beyond the immediate presence of a colonial power, such as people's efforts to become recognised as white in the peripheralised context of Finland. Struggles for whiteness and Europeanness at the periphery of the West demonstrate how this condition unfolds beyond the context of global metropoles that are at the forefront of de-/postcolonial discussions.

In drawing attention to how young Russian-speakers are not only racialised after migration, but themselves embrace a hierarchical division of the world into 'the West and the rest' and identify themselves with the West and whiteness, this thesis contributes to ongoing discussion and critique of the absence of race in migration research (Lentin, 2008; Hesse, 2007; Erel, Murji & Nahaboo, 2016; Hübinette and Lundström, 2014). Postcolonial scholars have also critiqued the absence of race in general social theory and sociology, despite race being the organising principle of modernity and the remit of sociology (Go, 2014; Bhambra, 2014; Boatcă & Costa, 2010). I argue that the production of 'difference' takes place without the necessary reference to embodied somatic features. Here, race is not understood as a biological signifier or reduced to a corporeal, visible difference, but is centred around the 'formative

signifier of *Europeanness* as a defining logic of race in the process of *colonially* constituting itself' vis-à-vis *non-Europeanness* (Hesse, 2007: 646). Drawing on critical whiteness studies, I have illustrated the production of hierarchies of whiteness and how racialisation takes place *in situ* (Fox, Moroşanu & Szilassy, 2012: 682).

While contributing to critique of the 'silence about race' (Lentin, 2008), I have also analysed connections between race, class and gender by asking what subject positions racialisation, as the production of 'difference', creates under conditions of capitalism. Post-Soviet youths' imaginaries of themselves and of 'the West' counter finely-graded racialised, classed and gendered hierarchies of labour where, for many, a place in 'the West' becomes available by being positioned in the system of production as de-skilled workers or unemployed. In other words, these are the conditions under which many are allowed to become part of the global 'West'. This demonstrates intimate connections between racialisation, coloniality and labour which often escape the gaze of research on racialisation, overlooking its material ramifications (see Mills, 1997). In addition, while building national identity around exceptional achievements in gender equality, and consequently racialising patriarchy and sexism as an attribute of tradition-bound Others (Keskinen, 2019; Tuori, 2007; Holli, 2003), the border regime and workfare programmes construct and produce migrant men and women as holders of 'natural' gendered skills. Workfare deploys deeply gendered logics to govern racialised minority men and women. Racialisation always works as a gendered process, producing gendered 'migrant worker' subjects. Racism and patriarchy are fundamental to the development and functioning of capitalism (Robinson, 1983; Federici, 2004), which creates hierarchies between workers and unequal valorisation of skills.

I argue that the domain of labour is key to young Russian-speakers' experiences of racialisation in Finland, and challenges their perceptions of self-worth, as they regularise their precarious migrant status by obtaining employment contracts, moving in and out of labour activation schemes, and becoming de-skilled. These labour market positions and emplacement within Finland's racialised and gendered class structures counter the imaginaries of who they might become through migration to 'the West'. Work and class are central to people's perceptions of self-worth and respectability (Skeggs, 1997). To use Stuart Hall's (1980: 341) words yet again, race is the modality through which minority populations and migrants live and experience class. By resisting manual labour and frustrating experiences of unemployment and labour activation, they encounter their own racialised class position and how 'the West' sees them. While imagining the global 'West' represented by Finland and valuing themselves as educated global subjects, they are violently classified, racialised, sexualised and gendered.

The production of racialised migrant categories has always been important for capital, and one site of racialisation in the lives of young post-Soviet migrants is the employment office itself. Young Russian-

speaking migrants, who experience unemployment disproportionately, are streamed to become more 'employable' for the Finnish labour market through de-skilling workfare devices. They are caught within the neoliberal racial formation when unemployed racialised Others become the opportunity for neoliberal capitalist enterprise. Achievement of formal citizenship rights and access to the welfare state no longer protect against the precarisation of labour, since welfare/workfare itself has become a site that targets and governs the undeserving unemployed as potential labour. I thus argue that migrant and racialised minority populations are not only excluded from the welfare state, but are, in fact, forcefully included in the market through de-skilling workfare devices.

Young post-Soviet people attempting to transform themselves through migration to the 'West' and the ways in which they become included as contingent labour through the border regime and workfare show lives under the conditions of the global *posts*, where whiteness and Europeanness are the only way to be fully human and modern, and where narratives of hard work and inclusion in the welfare state no longer hold promise. Despite being exploited and positioned as unemployed or de-skilled gendered workers after migration, many invest in their whiteness and attempt to dis-identify from non-white Others, taking a similar, though not the same, disadvantaged position as racialised outsiders (Virdee, 2014). In the ideology of economic productivity and competitiveness, unemployment has become a terrain of 'failed citizenship', particularly in relation to migrants (Keskinen, 2016). They thus embrace the very same system that racialises them in order to claim their own respectability and deservingness as good workers with a strong work ethic. I have analysed their racialisation of non-white Others as a declassificatory struggle (Tyler, 2013), through which they generate alternative value as deserving, hard-working and respectable subjects vis-à-vis non-white 'welfare scroungers' under conditions of neoliberalism and workfare capitalism. Although as old as colonialism itself (Fanon, 1969; Alatas, 1977), racial depictions of non-white Others as lazy and lacking discipline easily tie into contemporary neoliberal discourses of activeness, hard work and merit, as well as stigmatisation of passivity and dependency. Centuries-old colonial depictions of non-white people as lazy and lacking a work ethic become an opportunity for contested whites, such as Russian-speakers, to mobilise racial hierarchies and show that they are deserving and have failed 'just by chance', precisely because they consider themselves to be white. Thus, refusing to be compared with the absolute non-white Others 'withdrawn from history and modernity [altogether]' (Tlostanova, 2018: 3) has become a way for them to secure their own position on the edge – the outside limit – of whiteness in the matrix of modernity and rigid human taxonomies. Whiteness becomes rooted in neoliberal rationales and processes, through which capitalism promises possible inclusion one day. This importantly shows how investment in whiteness and dis-identification with others in order to demonstrate one's own deservingness preclude solidarities around class and a common interest in the anti-racist struggle.

Do young post-Soviet migrants remain attached to the promise of 'the West' they had envisioned when confronted by the border regime, gendering, racialisation and neoliberal workfare devices following migration? My answer is 'no'. Neverthless, there are opportunities 'to make hope possible', to borrow from Raymond Williams (1989). The notion of 'ambivalence' (McNevin, 2013: 183) holds together a subjectivity that *both* resists *and* reinscribes power relations. It captures the idea of wanting to fit in but not being in. This ambivalence refers to the fact that while holding on to whiteness, many young Russian-speaking migrants embrace frustration of the Western promise. Many become disenchanted and cynically aware of the failed and deficient promises of their inclusion in 'the West'.

Sitting in Olga's kitchen yet again, she asked me: 'How long are people still going to believe in and convince me of the wonders of this welfare state and this education system?' Young Russian-speakers' disillusionment resulting from their racialised labour market positions in 'the West' may produce cracks in their conflation of 'the West' with progress and the future, which brought them to Finland. These small cracks may become an opening for further critique of the racialised hierarchies they tend to reproduce and enable their own, at least partial, decolonisation. As Alina once summed up when searching for a new apartment: 'I would prefer to live in Helsinki, rather than in Vantaa, as there are just too many migrants there.' She added, after a short pause and laughing: 'Well, actually, just like myself.'

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